



Fiction

Group 2

The Brush

Hong Kong International School, Guo, Arielle – 9

“We’re at the museum!” I exclaimed to my two best friends.

It was field trip day at the museum. The museum was about twice the size of the Eiffel Tower.

“We should get off now,” I muttered.

We shuffled off our seats then hopped off the bus.

“I’ll tell you which group you’re in. So first Chuyi, Yuri, and Min.” Teacher shouted.

“We’re together!” Min burst.

The teacher continued to call all the students.

“And that’s it,” Teacher announced while someone gave me a piece of paper. “Your time starts now!”

“Let’s go!” I shouted at my friends. I read the first line of the paper. “Ok, so first we need to find the ancient house of the mom of Emperor Aizong from the Jin dynasty. It later became the Emperor’s safe house during the Mongol–Jin War for protection in the year 1232.”

We were the first to get to the ancient China hall.

“Do you think this is it?” Min questioned as she pointed to the model of a small house.

“Probably, it said it would look like a regular home so it would serve well as a hiding place,” I replied. “And that house looks very normal.”

Min touched the roof of the house. The house rumbled a bit and then collapsed.

“Oops,” Min sputtered. Though before anything could happen we got sucked into darkness.

The paper flew out of my hand and flew above us. Everything was twirling and spinning and then...

Flash.

A candlelight flickered.

Everything stopped spinning.

Click.

A door locked shut.

Silence.

Just then I realized we were inside a house, but not just any house. This house looked haunted.

Spiders crawled from the wall. They seemed to all look at me when I moved.

“I’m sorry, what just happened?” Yuri said, very unaware of her surroundings.

“I think we’re inside the Emperor’s safe house.” I shuddered. I hated spiders.

“I don’t think I was supposed to touch that.” Min blurted.

“Min, in these surroundings do you think you were?” Yuri asked.

“No,” Min admitted.

“I really don’t like this place. We can’t just sit here and do nothing.” I said, “Let’s go forward and see if there’s an exit.”

Just then I saw an arrow fly across the room and skimmed past Yuri’s shoulder.

“You alright?” I asked.

“Yea totally, why?” she replied.

“Because an arrow flew right past you,” I said.

“Wait— what!” Yuri said.

“Wait, what do you mean, don’t you see?” I said.

“No, I don’t.” Yuri replied.

“If you can’t see, then I don’t think that you can dodge the arrows. In that case, let’s lie on the ground.” I commanded.

“Alright... but I don’t see an arrow!” Yuri huffed.

We all laid flat on the floor and crawled forward. It was hard work, but I think I would rather lie flat rather than get shot by an arrow.

“I think that you can stand up now.” I said, slowly rising from the floor since I stopped seeing arrows. Just ahead I saw something. It looked like someone was writing a script but something strange was happening. The brush was writing by itself! I walked closer to the brush and said, “Stop!”

The brush suddenly stopped, then looked at me and literally talked, “Hello Chuyi!”

“What is going on and why are you talking?” I exclaimed. I was spooked.

“Didn't your Mom tell you? The Emperor Aizong of Jin dynasty is your great great great great great great great great great great grandfather that passed.” the brush said.

“How many greats is that?” I heard Min whisper to Yuri.

“Dunno,” Yuri answered.

“Anyways— anyone in your blood line can control most of the house and you can see the invisible arrows. You see, the Mongols were amazing archers so the Emperor designed these invisible arrows for self protection in this house,” the brush explained.

“Mr. Brush, could you show me an exit please?” I asked.

“There is one problem. When the Emperor made the house, it only had one hidden exit.” the brush explained. “It was told that the key is on an invisible arrow.”

“OK. Because we need to go, let's find the exit.” I spoke determinedly.

I looked around and saw nothing but a basket of arrows. No that couldn't be, it was too easy. I stepped closer. Still nothing.

Then it happened.

The floor erupted and a big crack expanded until the basket of arrows was surrounded by a ring of nothingness.

There was only a small island for the basket to stay on. I looked down inside the ring. It was very deep and dark and creepy. But I would need to cross.

“Mr. Brush, you said I could control most of the house, right?” I asked the Brush.

“Yes, that is correct.” the Brush responded.

“Alright then,” I responded.

I turned back to the crack and said, “Form a pathway connected to the island.”

A small pathway formed but quickly collapsed.

“We're never going to get out of here.” Yuri complained, “It's not like you could make a portal and get out of here, can you?”

“That's it, a portal!” I exclaimed.

“Make a portal to the island.” I tried.

Slowly a portal formed next to me that connected to the island so I slowly walked to the portal and stepped inside.

Suddenly, a kind of bitterness started to spread over me. Finally it stopped. Slowly I stepped out of the portal and saw where I was. I was on the island. I quickly walked towards the basket of arrows and looked at each one.

I took one out and a red light appeared on a crack in the wall.

This must be it. This must be the key.

I threw the arrow at the light. Red light burst through my eyes.

Ring ring. my alarm rang and I slowly opened my eyes. I couldn't believe It was all a dream! I checked my calendar...better prepare for my field trip today.

The Wanli Rocket Umbrella

Hong Kong International School, Wu, Colton – 9

One day, Ming Lee, a first-year policeman, taking a break at the Police Station when the crime bell rang and all the policemen ran out to get to the scene. On the way there, Ming Lee was stuck in big crowds which made him late and miss the robbery. When he went back to the station, he got warned that if he misses another crime, he would be fired. He was China's Slowest Constable! He did not want to lose his job, so he decided to think of something that would help him.

As he was thinking at home in the evening, he thought of something that he could invent to move to crime scenes quicker. What he needed was a way to rise above the crowds to avoid all the obstructions on the way to the crime. "How could I get up that high?" he wondered. Suddenly, an idea popped into his mind. "I know," he said, "With a bit of help from high technology, I can invent a lightweight levitating device." So, Ming Lee grabbed some paper and started to sketch out some simple designs.

His sketch was of a canopy with a pole and a few boosters on the side of the pole. After the early sketches, he went to his planning table, and collected his drawing pencils and geometry equipment. He began his detailed design starting with the pole. He had to work out how long the pole needed to be so he stood up facing the wall and raised his hand to shoulder height. Then, he made a mark on the wall where his hand was. He got a tape measure and measured up the wall to where he thought was the right height. Back at his drawing table, he drew a line for the pole and wrote the measurement next to it. Then, he worked out where the canopy should be and calculated the length of the aluminum spines to hold the canopy up. Now, he had come to the scientific part, the boosters. He decided he would need four boosters, which would be electric fans. They would need to be tiny but super powerful!

His latest design task was to work out a list of all the materials he would need, keeping in mind that everything must be as light as possible. He looked online for electric motors and discovered that the most suitable ones were actually available in his town. So, taking his shopping list and credit card, he set off to buy all the things he would need.

After he scoured the entire town, he came home with fabric, an aluminum pole, some aluminum wires, electric fans, screws, electrical wires and switches. He also found a lightweight rock-climbing harness that he had used when he was in his childhood bouldering class. Then, he got his design plans and went to his work table to start building the levitating device. Ming Lee cut the pole to shoulder-high length and then he wrapped soft leather around the bottom end to make it comfortable to hold. Next, he cut the fabric to size. It was a beautiful design with the Chinese characters of his name on it. Then, he attached thin aluminum wires from the edges of the fabric to the pole, on the underside, like umbrella spines. After that, he screwed the electric fans around the pole near the top, where they could fill the canopy with air. Then he attached the rock-climbing harness to the pole so he would be secured.

Late that night, when everyone was asleep, he took his device to the park to test it. He fastened himself into his harness, firmly took hold of the pole, and switched on the powerful electric fans. He felt his feet lift off the ground, and he rose up until he was the height of the trees, and then leaned forward, towards the gate to go in that direction. He tried leaning to the left, then to the right, and found that he could steer the contraption in any direction just by moving his body. This was amazing! Feeling very pleased with himself, he returned home and went to bed.

The next day, Ming Lee decided to bring his new device to work. When he got to the Police Station, he went to the lounge and waited for the crime bell to ring. A few minutes later, there was the familiar clanging sound. Ming Lee leapt up, put on his device and took off above the crowd. He made it to the crime scene ahead of all the other officers! He caught the thief red-handed and his boss was delighted. All that week, he continued to arrive first, and his arrest record was fantastic. His colleagues began asking him if he would make one of his devices for them, but instead, he said he would teach them how to make them, and maybe even start a company. So, after work, he took them to his workshop and taught them how to make his invention. Then, Ming Lee thought of something; "What should I call this device?" he said to his fellow policemen. "Oh yes! The Wanli Rocket Umbrella!" It's named after the Great Wall, as it can fly ten thousand miles far!

Ming Lee's invention was adopted by the Chinese Police Force, with a special unit being set up at each station. These units were called "The Flying Policemen."

The World's First Fake Bank Note (Jiaozi)

International College Hong Kong: Hong Lok Yuen, Lee Amanda – 8

The year was 1079 of the Song Dynasty. Ruiyi was walking home from school with her primary school classmates just like other school days. On that particular day, Ruiyi felt odd, she was not in her usual chatty mood. Her best friend Liya had noticed and asked Ruiyi.

“Are you OK?” Liya asked.

“I’m fine,” Ruiyi replied in a soft voice.

As Ruiyi and her classmates walked past the village graveyard, a short distance from the village entrance, three masked men jumped out from behind three gravestones and dashed towards the school children.

Liya was the first to scream at the top of her voice. Ruiyi was calm as if she felt or knew something like this would happen.

“Grab that one with the short hair,” one of the men exclaimed, pointing at Ruiyi.

Whilst the other two men grabbed Ruiyi by the arms, Liya and her classmates kicked and swung their school bags at all three men. Ruiyi felt a cloth, with some foul liquid smell, was placed over her nose and mouth. She could hear her classmates screaming for help, but their voices grew softer and quieter until there was complete silence.

Ruiyi woke up sometime later lying down in a cold, damp and poorly lit room with three candles. Her blindfold must have come loose, and she could see through the corner of her left eye. Her mouth was stuffed with a rag and her hands and feet were tied. She couldn’t remember how she ended up there. She heard voices from an adjacent room.

“You go and find a messenger and deliver this ransom note to her father.” A man said in a deep voice.

Ruiyi thought to herself whilst trying to pull herself together and attempted to figure out what was going on, and why was she kidnapped? She knew her family wasn’t poor, but they were not rich either. Her classmates’ families were much wealthier. She knew her father worked in a bank but had no idea of his role. Her brother, Jinhong, was some kind of imperial guard.

Ruiyi’s father received the ransom note from a young village boy whilst at the bank but no matter how hard he questioned that boy messenger, including squeezing his neck, the messenger couldn’t reveal any further information other than a masked man gave him a ‘man tau’ [bread roll] and asked him to deliver the note to that address. Ruiyi’s father packed his bag to go home and asked a colleague to fetch his son, Jinhong, from the palace to go home at once.

Ruiyi’s father had worked out a detailed plan to rescue Ruiyi.

“We have few options,” Ruiyi’s father began explaining to Jinhong. “We cannot file a report and request the officials for help,” he continued. “We do not have one hundred taels of gold as requested on the ransom demand. So, this appears to be our only option,” he exclaimed.

“I have a stack of these ‘Jiaozi’ [ancient paper money] which I have individually stamped with a special numbering system, and they can be traceable,” Ruiyi’s father explained.

“Father!” Jinhong interrupted, “did you steal those Jiaozi from the bank?”

“Let’s just say if we use these Jiaozi to rescue Ruiyi and then recover them and destroy them, then nobody needs to know.”

A second detailed ransom note was delivered later that evening to their home address stating the place to exchange the one hundred taels of gold for the hostage, and that if officials were to be seen or heard then the exchange would be cancelled and there will be consequences.

Jinhong was appointed to carry the cotton sac of Jiaozi and go alone to the village graveyard. Before going to the graveyard, he ordered his five palace guard colleagues to dress in black and hide in nearby bushes and trees early. Jinhong arrived alone in the middle of the village graveyard.

“Drop the sac of gold and walk back ten paces,” a loud voice was heard from behind a large gravestone. “Once I see the one hundred taels of gold, I will release the girl.”

Jinhong dropped the sac as ordered and stepped back ten paces.

“These aren’t taels of gold,” shouted the masked man who appeared to be holding a young girl with hands and feet tied and blindfolded. “I’m not releasing the girl!”

“Wait,” interrupted Jinhong, “We don’t have one hundred taels of gold but we have honoured our commitment. That sac of Jiaozi is equivalent to the same amount!”

Another masked man suddenly appeared, he lit a small lantern and shone it at the opened sac. He randomly examined the Jiaozi inside the sac and then signaled to the first masked man, “This is good enough, now let’s leave!”

Suddenly, the lantern went off, footsteps followed by some banging noise. Jinhong lit his lantern and saw Ruiyi lying on the ground with hands and feet tied. He then whistled and his five palace guard colleagues came running towards him but those two masked men were nowhere to be seen. Jinhong carried Ruiyi home and reunited with their parents.

Meanwhile, Ruiyi’s father has asked all his connections in various banks and businesses to lookout for Jiaozi notes that had specific range of numbers stamped on them. A few days later, Ruiyi’s father received a message that a neighbouring villager, known to be poor all along, was splashing on expensive dinners for his friends and family night after night. Jinhong grew suspicious and asked his colleagues for help, to inspect the Jiaozi notes that villager was using and followed him to try and catch his accomplices. Eventually, those three masked men who kidnapped Ruiyi were caught and jailed. Ruiyi’s father has also been pardoned for his role in making the fake Jiaozi as he cleverly came up with a numbering scheme that can distinguish real Jiaozi from the ones he printed. To combat fake Jiaozi, they were later stamped with multiple bank seals.

New Tales of China's Inventions

Kau Yan School, Lam, Abbie – 10

Part one

Once upon a time, everyone in China did not have paper to write on, so they wrote on rectangular pieces of bamboo or wood bound together to be longer.

Unlike a piece of common A4 paper, they weren't thin; they were very heavy and thick and absolutely material-wasting, but they couldn't cut it thin; it would easily snap in half and waste a ton more of the material.

So, to solve the problem, the idea of making a thin, light and useful piece of material for writing and drawing came up in the brains of a few townfolk. They collected wood, bamboo and a few more various materials for the project, but the next problem was how to create it.

Naturally, mashing the materials would be sensible, so the materials were mashed and mixed together. Materials like wood and bamboo were stiff, even after being stirred and mashed, so it was mixed with water before it was dried for thirty days or so in a mold made of wood and resin.

The townfolk created a marvelous creation, and it was named paper.

The rich folk and royals began asking for some paper and the recipe very sooner. Under the popularity of the use of paper, every paper factory ended up with a huge business roll.

The townfolk made a great thing, really, but it was still too rough-surfaced and material-wasting, so this is not the end of the story, or else we wouldn't have our A4 paper today!

Part two

A man, not a rich king or a glittering high-class folk but an ordinary orphan who was about 20 years old loved writing. As a young farmer, he loved not only writing and drawing, but also the smart idea of paper. He absolutely loved and worshipped the creators of paper, who lived centuries ago. By that time, he did not know that paper-making could get him fame and adoration like them.

One day, when he got a ticket to visit a famous paper factory and make paper freely, he got the perfect chance to use his talents.

He inspected the paper-makers carefully and asked many questions. The factory owner noticed his interest in paper and paid attention to him.

When the paper-making session came, the factory owner laid the materials on everyone's tables, then, they started making paper.

The man quickly mashed the materials into splinters and with great care, he grated the materials into powders and mixed them together. Instead of mixing the materials with water directly, he put the powder in a cotton container and bound the rope on the opening close before dipping it in water and securing the rope onto the bottom of the pool so it would infiltrate as much water as possible.

Then, they returned after a break and the young man fished out the soaked sack. He poured the powder that had been finished infusing out and melted some rubbery baleen in a pot. Using a piece of wood with a flat edge, he smeared the tempered baleen in the mold to make a smaller but more flexible mold. The

powder was now a thin but smooth substance, a perfect mixture for the needed even thickness and smoothness of paper.

He dumped the mixture on the center of the soft mold and shook it for an evenly thick paper patiently. The final step was to leave it to dry. The young man brought it home after the speech finished and then rested it on the drying platform in the garden.

He would inspect the undried spots and arrange the branches that fitted into a platform he made for drying stuff. This is to let the sunlight focus on various spots of undried paper.

When the paper was dried and finally finished, he showed it to the paper factory owner. The expert on paper and paper-making inspected the perfect sheet of paper with awe.

'This.....this.....you made this?.....oh my gosh, this will change the whole history of paper making!' The factory owner blurted, then, taking a deep breath, he calmed down and asked, 'Please sir, will you work for us, or say, share the recipe for this?'

Saying this, the factory owner clicked his teeth and a man brought a piece of wood forward. In the smooth waxed wood surface, the factory owner used a hot metal nib and burnt in, 'In the honour of the factory owner of Wai Ki Sham paper factory, by signing this contract, I give the factory to the signer once I sign it, in offer of a lifelong working place and fair payment of a worker. If the following offers and conditions are all considered and agreed, the signer and I must sign the contract as a proof.' The man held the hot nib and signed the contract with a slow and excited hand as the now-not-the-factory-owner signed on the other side of the plank.

Signing the contract, the young man became the owner and the first-in-command of the factory workers. Smiling, he said, 'Now, let's get to paper making.'

Part three

The young man rearranged the equipment and storages before making paper mixture, bowl after bowl. He made the workers and the old factory owner learn the recipe of thin paper in a few hours, then they started to work.

The second day, they began to sell paper, which made money, which made them even more famous. The brand Wai Ki Sham beat all the other famous brands like Kum Fung and Tong Wing Ma.

The man grew old, married a young lady and had three children. On his last day of his life, he wrote the recipe of paper on three notebooks, slipped it onto his beloved children's desks, and died peacefully in his sleep.

This story, my fellow readers, tells you that the easily found paper has a great history beneath.

New tales of China's inventions

Korean International School, Leung, Ching Lai Jasper – 9

Once upon a time there was a guy Wan who came from Guangzhou of China. He wanted a job so he found a job online. It was a job of scientist that studies the space to make more resources at a place called Junk and Stuff. The job requires no skills but imaginations, he got hired by making an invention full of buckets then he got the job. However, he sometimes ask his boss Ray to get some stuff from the shop to make inventions like radioactive ray 3000, a ray that uses uranium for charging, also the infinity mechanical armor and Wan is going to make some difference to the world.

First of all, let's make some new cars, Wan said. The first ever invention is a flying BYD. Flying BYD is a private car that looks like a limo that can party and it can do auto that is light speed up to 700 km/ hour. It can take 12 passengers and there are robot butlers and also a Smart Ray 3000 that can make anything smart just by hitting them with the ray and just push button on the back off the machine. It can be cooled down for 5 seconds and they will be super smart and will solve anything in 0 seconds.

Now, he is going to make a time machine that is twice the human size which can stop at the prehistoric time. It can also travel back to any time line there and it can also go back to the time where nothing was created in China and when the great wall was built.

The first robot created by Wan was an ape that was taller than a skyscraper and stronger than 60 rhinos it is for protecting secret organizations in Tianjin. Wan also made a monkey robot that is stronger than a 56 penguins and it is bigger than a house. Wan now is going to make a flying ball that collects food for you it puts the food into a button that when you press it the food will appear that is part of a secret organization.

The day after the invention of the robots, Wan was going to make a Chinese dragon that is as long as a building. It can also breathe blue fire and cannot get wet. It cannot get destroyed and there is a house in his belly which has two butlers that can serve whatever we want.

In terms of Military inventions, Wan now is going to make an iron mecha, the mecha is taller than an elephant and stronger than an army. It can fire missiles and it has a jet pack. Wan also made something that looks like a smart watch that is called alieonic omnitrix. That also makes you turn into an alien from different planets, some of the aliens are called four arms XLR8 RATH.

Moreover, Wan is now going to make a TV man and camera men, speaker men to make things easier and to have more technology, makes things cheaper and even better to do more things and break the laws of physics.

Wan now is going to make a goo-like creature that can go in someone's body then it can use the body to make anything attached to it. It can also make an axe and a robot, new technology that can pause time. Its weakness is fire and lighting bolts which can be able to control the body.

He's now going to make a hammer that fly's back to you when you need it and control lighting and can fly breakthrough, anything and can enchant anything, with the power of lightning. And also absorb lighting and get upgraded to a new version that is a giant axe.

Today Wan is going to make a destroyer weapon that can destroy half of the universe and also create new thing like a time portal and a new era of species called the solar dragons that can basically fire a fireball at a person that can burn anything.

So, Wan now is going to make a machine gun that can shoot by itself, it also can have three guns to buy from the shop in the city. And the gun has two snipers to defend the city and to be sold to the guards.

Now, Wan is going to make a phone that is a hologram, with voice command and the owners touch for safety and can only be picked up by the owner. And be able to do stuff without touching anything, to work and by playing games in real life.

Wan made a new giant tank to defend the city and inside is a fried chicken playing laser tag. Wan is going to make a gamer with a robot teacher playing Fortnite with a laptop and a bunch of games you can play.

Wan now is going to make a very great business in Beijing, the business is a selling games with very good pixel in each games and new updates that is not released.

Wan now is going to make a giant house but it can also shrink and have sixty dining rooms, 11 bedrooms, nine gaming rooms, 30 poolrooms and 20 movie rooms.

Wan now is going to build a very strong base with a high security system with a laser wall, robot guards and a strong pet called the Nemean lion that is huge with a bunch of metal armor with fire balls and jetpack and also very good furniture inside.

Wan now is going to make a machine that absorbs energy from the clouds. When they get the energy, they make sure that it is stable then see if it is the right amount of energy and can make new technology like a time machine and a location detector and a two solar energy panels.

Now Wan is going to make an automatic dressing up machine that takes two seconds to dress up and can also get any drink they need when they are thirsty and hungry.

So now Wan is going to make a silk collar for animal. The collar will make them speak and get super strong ability for whoever wears it. It will talk and walk superfast, jump super far, fly really fast.

After completing above every projects, Wan got a job in Hong Kong as Chief Executive Officer of “Red Space” It is a business of researchers that travel through the space outside the galaxy to find more interesting stuff and materials for buildings. It is also an academy for training youngsters to be spacemen.

New Tales of China's Inventions

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Chen, Jiayi – 11

“Ring, ring, ring !” It’s a quarter to eight. “ Mum!” No response. “ Dad?” Still no response. I sat up and looked around, an unfamiliar place .” Where am I?” My eyes glanced at the calendar on the desk, it clearly showed 2100. A chill welled up my heart. Suddenly, a sound of footsteps got louder and louder. I wanted to run but it’s too late. Cold sweat ran down my cheeks. I closed my eyes tightly.

Abruptly, I felt a warm tap on my shoulder,” Are you awake?” I slowly opened my eyes up, looked at her, and asked who she was. “Oh, sorry! Let me explain now .” She used her finger to tap the wall three times. In an instant, a robot flew towards us and scanned us. “ I am Joycelyn Chen. My name is the same as yours cause I am you and you are me. I used a time machine to teleport you here. See, our DNA are the same” she said while pointing at the screen the hovering robot showed. I stared at her with a puzzled look.” So, it means that you are the future Joycelyn? Can I call your F.J.?” Asked I curiously.

F.J. grabbed me suddenly and rushes out of her office, straight into an alley then she looked around and confirmed no one was around, she slightly pushed a wall. Then a camera appeared. She clicked it and a door on the wall opened. We went down the stairs into a spacious hall with a lot of computers. “ Do you know who Dr.Chan is ?” I looked at her quizzically .” He is a super famous scientist who invented many hi-tech things. However.....” She paused,” That day I went to an important science conference when he was also there. I wanted his advice on my new invention, an ear scanner, which can scan and receive any sound within 1000 kilometers. However, I accidentally overheard Dr. Chan’s words through my ear scanner. ” STEAL ALL great China’s inventions !” and that night TV news broadcasted two valuable ancient relics stolen. I know it must be him!” She let out a long sigh.

Then, I sneaked into his office and found out that he had a gigantic conspiracy, he wanted to go back to the past to steal and use the power of all the emeralds in the four inventions to make the whole universe become a brainless world !” F.J.exclaimed .

“So, I found you! Future Joycelyn and now Joycelyn cooperate to stop this !” “ You and me ?” “Yes! I have packed up, the time machine, and the secret map we need.” What will we do ?” “ We take the time machine, follow the map, and find the four emeralds in China’s inventions. Then, we can stop bad scientist Dr.Chan !” Her eyes shone like stars.“ When will we go ?” “ Tonight !” We dashed into the time machine

” “Here we are! We are in the Han Dynasty !” F.J. said proudly.

“ We must find Cai Lun for the oldest paper in the world where the first emerald was hidden before Dr.Chan arrives .” Said F.J.

“ Better to find Cai Lun who invented paper making .’ I suggested strongly.

We quickly found Cai Lun’s mansion on our secret map and landed on the rooftop. Cai Lun was there sitting under a tree thinking how to invent papers. He took out a well-cut bamboo and soaked them in water. We stared with bated breath. After soaking, the bamboo was boiled to make a mushy pulp. At last, he asked his worker to press out water and dry out. Suddenly there was a green glowing in the water .” Emerald!” I whispered. When I was going to jump down, Dr. Chan and his servants were almost there. F.J. stopped me and took out a new gadget “See My Invisible Handy!” She controlled the robot’s hand to catch the emerald quickly. Soon the piece of emerald was in hand. Suddenly, countless sharp swords shot at us. F.J. quickly opened the time machine door and dragged into the time machine.” Run! To! Tang Dynasty !”

F.J. raised the torch high and we walked carefully in the dark, Finally, we arrived at the Tang Dynasty. Using my watch navigator and following that magic map, we found the inventor of the compass. Luan Da, he just made the first compass .” Yes! I make it !” He cried. We put on our invisible suits quickly and followed him. Suddenly we found the second piece of the emerald under the compass. F.J. immediately ran towards the glowing emerald. At that moment a net caught her.

Dr.Chan got her. I quickly jumped towards and grasped the emerald. Then, I cut the net with a pocket knife and rescued F.J.. We rushed into the time machine door.....

Gunpowder! The third stop is still the Tang Dynasty to look for the inventor of gunpowder –Sun Simiao. After flying through the time machine, we climbed up the rooftop of Sun’s house. Unfortunately, Dr.Chan and his servants arrived at Sun’s house earlier. At that moment, a cannonball was launched out “Boom!” with a loud bang. There was a small green stone dropped on the ground. It is the third piece of emerald. Dr.Chan ran to grasp the green stone and disappeared in the dark. We sat on the ground frustratedly. A warm voice came out “ You must be Joycelyn Chen! Here is my secret recipe, It may be helpful to protect you.” It’s Sun Simiao who passed us his new invention. He chose to trust and support us.

The fourth task was to go to the Song Dynasty and find the last piece of emerald.

F.J.’s time machine quickly sent us to the early Song Dynasty. It’s not difficult to find the inventor Bi Sheng who invented printing techniques. His son was playing with clay happily. Bi Sheng utilized the clay to invent the great technique finally. Suddenly a green emerald was glowing in the clay, I jumped down with excitement and quickly grasped the last piece from the clay.

“Haha! Although I have just only one piece emerald, my newest gadget can expand its power to increase 5 times more !” Dr.Chan said , appearing in front of us.

We started running. F.J. took out the three pieces of emerald and shaped them together into a Chinese word “ 中“.

The word glowed in F.J.’s hand with a tremendous magic power. Dr.Chan could not resist our attack so he was turned into ashes finally.

A strong light shot at me so I fainted. When I woke up, I was in my bed, holding the three pieces of the emerald...

The Mysterious Adventure of “Paper”

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Choi, Yik Him – 11

It was a hot and muggy day. Sitting on my own seat I was listening to the staid Chinese History teacher, Mr Choo, teaching the textbook. The main reason I hate Chinese History is not the topics, but the time arrangement. Why should every History lesson be arranged after lunch? Don't the teachers know that it would make us drowsy and in the long run affect pupils' health?

“I believe you guys all know the historical incidents happened in Han Dynasty,” Mr Choo said. “Now, here's a assignment. Please write about a people in Han Dynasty. To make it fun, you can choose any aspects you like! Yippee!” I appreciated Mr Choo's efforts for making a relaxing vibe; however, I was a bundle of nerves as I had no idea about the topic!

“Ding Dong ---” the bell rang. Phew! The school finally ends! I quickly packed my schoolbag and left immediately. As usual when I was passing the thicket on the way home, the weather changed without a notice. Out of nowhere, there were strange sounds, clouds and dense fog. I slowly fell asleep in the sea of clouds. For sleeping so long that I didn't know the time and the place, I found myself sitting in the middle of the forest. Meanwhile, a young man was walking toward me while I was cleaning up my thought.

“Excuse me. I'm lost. Where is it?” I asked politely. The man replied with smile, “Here's Baishui County.” As I scrutinized the man, it was weird that he dressed in a strange way. He wore a big hat and a thick gown with several layers, using a ribbon weaving to fix his body, as well as a pair of long boots as if he was wearing a Halloween costume.

“My name is Paper Zhang. What's your name?” I asked warily, gazing the young man. “My name is Cai Lun. Nice to meet you,” the man answered. I responded, “Nice to meet you, Cai L.....” Wait ... Cai Lun? Where did I hear this name before? Abruptly, Mr Choo's stern face flashed through my mind! Cai Lun, the ancient Chinese inventor of paper! I travelled through time to Han Dynasty! Wasn't that tooooooooooo adventurous?

After calming myself down, I went with Cai upon his invitation. Cai introduced himself as a government officer and he had just attended a friend's birthday party living along Wai River. It was a sunny day and we enjoyed the stunning scenery and chatted a lot along the journey feeling like the old friends. When we went to a pond near riverside, we saw a gang of children. They seemed to play something cheerfully we didn't know. They concentrated and very busy on their play so they didn't realized there were two people standing in front of them. Some were pulling out a thick pulp from the water; some were putting the pulp sheets under the sun; some were writing something on the dried pulp sheets. Cai stared at the children and couldn't take his eyes off them as if he was thinking about something seriously. As time passed by, Cai finally stepped forward toward the children and asked, “Hi, what are you playing?” One boy who seemed to be the leader among the children replied, “These are ‘cotton skin’! They're fun! Do you want some?” Just then, the boy gave Cai a piece of “cotton skin” and waved goodbye. Cai took a closer look at it, touched it, smelled it, and even tasted it. After a while, he dashed to the edge of pond and examined the pulp meticulously. Suddenly, Cai widely opened his eye, grinned from ear to ear and shrieked with happiness, “I've found it! I've found it!” Then, he galloped to the village to ask one old villager for details. According to the old man, this was a stagnant pond. For a long time people had disposed the cotton waste to the pond after popping cotton. Little by little, they throw another rubbish like abandoned shoes, string, leather in it and eventually the water turned into rusty pulp.

Later, we returned to the inn after sunset. Cai and I sat around the table and Cai breathed a sigh of relief as if a big problem was solved. He said, “Zhang, today is the happiest day in my life. Since I was young, I dreamt to invent something convenient for writing and make people to have a better life. As bamboo is heavy, it's inconvenient. I've tried hard and failed numerous times, until today, when I found the pulp it inspired me and I know I will succeed in the near future. Will you accompany me to make it come true?”

I was touched. I nodded and said yes to Cai.

Time files. One month later, after refinements and improvements, here came the final version of pulp sheet. Soon, Cai built a large factory to produce the sheet in mass. One day, Cai said to me, “Zhang, without your help and support, I can’t succeed. Therefore, may I ask your permission to name the sheet by using your name, ‘Paper?’”

“Yes, absolutely!” I exclaimed.

“And,” Cai took out a piece of ‘paper’ from his pocket and said sincerely, “this is for you, my dearest friend.”

Once I received the gift, I saw Cai’s handwriting and signature on it:

“FRIENDSHIP FOREVER!

IT’S A BLESSING TO HAVE A BEST FRIEND LIKE YOU.

CAILUN (signature)”

At that moment, I couldn’t help but the tears were running out of control. All of a sudden, a voice yelling at the top of her lungs, “PAPER Zhang! Wake up or you’ll be late for school!”

It’s Mum. I rolled my eyes and realized that all adventures were a dream although the scene was pretty true. However, by next second, I puzzled whether it was just only a dream since I shockingly saw that piece of paper Cai sent me “yesterday” was incredibly on my desk, next to my Chinese History assignment.....

New Tales of China's Inventions

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Choi, Wing Hei – 10

In the heart of China, where ancient traditions intertwine with modern innovation, new tales are being woven every day. From the bustling streets of Shanghai to the serene landscapes of Guilin, China's narrative continues to evolve.

Amidst the skyscrapers that pierce the clouds, a new generation of entrepreneurs is shaping the future of technology and commerce. Start-up hubs in Beijing and Shenzhen buzz with creativity, birthing innovations that ripple across the globe. Meanwhile, the echoes of ancient wisdom still resonate in the tranquil courtyards of the Forbidden City, reminding visitors of China's enduring cultural legacy.

In the realm of art and literature, contemporary Chinese creators are crafting stories that reflect the complexities of a rapidly changing society. Through brushstrokes and words, they capture the essence of modern China, exploring themes of identity, urbanization, and social change. Traditional art forms such as Peking opera and calligraphy continue to thrive, bridging the past and the present.

Venturing beyond the urban landscape, China's natural wonders continue to enchant and inspire. The misty peaks of Huangshan, the otherworldly karst formations of Zhangjiajie, and the majestic Yangtze River all beckon adventurers and nature enthusiasts to partake in their timeless beauty.

As China asserts itself on the global stage, its role in shaping the future of our planet becomes increasingly significant. From pioneering sustainable energy initiatives to leading the way in technological advancements, China's influence reverberates across continents.

Amidst the whirlwind of change, the ancient pulse of China endures, weaving together the old and the new into a rich tapestry of stories that captivate the world.

New Tales of China's Inventions

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Chu, Long Yan Coleman – 10

In ancient China, there were many important inventions like gunpowder, papermaking, the compass and printing. All these inventions marked a milestone of the development of China in the area of education, military, culture and history. Furthermore, some ancient medical treatments and medicine were also very important to cure disease and save millions of lives till now. However, there are lots of disease with no cure like Aids, cancers and blindness.

Can you image what happen if one day you cannot see anything? It will take you away from a sighted colorful world to complete darkness, moving through simulated daily environment with a cane, “reading” the raised dots with your fingers, exploring the unseen, escorted by your family members. You can only challenge your other senses of here, touch, smell and even taste to ‘see’ the world.

First of all, let me tell you how we “see”. Light bounces off everything we see. When our eyes take in light through the lens, there are special light sensitive cells on the retina to convert the light into messages, which we called them nerve impulses. Nerve impulses travel to our brain via the optic nerve and our brain will interpret the nerve impulses and tells us what we are seeing. Unfortunately, the malfunction of the lens, sensitive cells, optic nerve or even the brain cells causes blindness.

Today we are here to announce a breakthrough technology; it will change the world forever. The revolutionized invention is the “Eyeball 2024”. This milestone invention was the fruit of a group of Chinese medical scientists, ophthalmologists, anesthesiologists, biomedical engineers with the generous sponsorship from the companies Huawei. They have worked together for 4 years to invent this piece of “ART”. It can be transplanted in the human skull and replace the malfunction eyeball and can totally simulate the human eyeball function.

The “Eyeball 2024” is an invention based on the simple principle of vision. In the Eyeball 2024, there is a piece of “lens”. The teams spent almost two years to produce this revolutionized “lens” which was actually inspired by the smart phone technology of Huawei. This “lens” can detect and capture the image of the user looking at. If people suffering from visual impairment implanted the Eyeball 2024, the eyeball can receive light from the environment through the “lens”, it then generates “special signal” and send the signal through the “neuron-cable” which is connected to his brain cell in the visual region. It is these sophisticated “lens”, “neuron-cable” and “special signal” works together make connection and stimulation of the human brain cell possible. The Eyeball 2024 not only brings people vision, but also improve the well-being of the visually impaired and their families.

Nowadays, there are about 8.69 million people who suffered from visual impairment in China. With the invention of the Eyeball 2024, all these people can see the world and have a new life again. At the same time, every year the government can reallocate tremendous resources to help more and more people in needed instead of providing the visually impaired with different services like eye care, rehabilitation, vocational training, educational support, employment guidance, and residential care etc.

It is believed that with the maturation of advance technology, the cost of the Eyeball 2024 will be much lower and affordable by many users. Though I agree “The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched – they must be felt with the heart,” by Helen Keller, no one will object that it will be much better if we can see the world with our hearts and our eyes at the same time.

New Tales of China's Inventions

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Lai, Pui Sang – 10

One day, a boy was born full of curiosity and honesty. When he grew up, he became the inventor of paper, which spread his fame across China.

That boy was me.

My name is Cai Lun, and this is my life.

I was born in Guiyang. As I was born without any problems with my health, my relatives were over the moon, so they had a party that night.

When I grew up, I went to school. My exam results were excellent! My teachers and classmates also liked me because of my good conduct results. When I went home, I always revised the topics I learnt. One day, the emperor came to our school, and he had a chat with me. After hearing about my talents, he was surprised and admired me very much.

In 75 CE, I got a job in the royal palace – a chamberlain, to help manage the royal household. I assisted Empress Dou in securing her son to be the crown prince, by interrogating Consort Song and her sister, who later killed themselves. In 88 CE, she rewarded me with two positions: Zhongchang shi, a political official to the emperor; and Shangfang Ling, to oversee the production of making instruments and weapons, for accomplishing my tasks. I was so proud of myself!

Even though Emperor He unseated the Dou family in 92 CE, I was undisturbed and continued doing my jobs. I became responsible for ceremonial weapons. I tried many ways to smelt metal, tried many times to make the sword sharper Finally, I found a way to make the sword extremely sharp, by mixing iron with different materials, making it stronger, so that it would be easier to sharpen, making it the perfect sword for battle. I cheered, “I finally succeeded!”

As I wanted to write down the new method of making swords, I ordered one of my servants to fetch me some bamboo slips. Later, I heard a bang! I quickly rushed to my servant and asked, “Are you alright?” My servant muttered, “These bamboo slips are too heavy!”

As quick as lightning, an idea popped into my head. “Aha!” I cried, “Now, I shall make something to replace the current materials, to make reading and writing more convenient. Yes, it must be light and cheap!” From that instant, I rejected all invitations and started thinking about ways to improve the current materials used for writing. However, no matter how hard I thought, I still could not think of the perfect materials for making paper.

The next day, as I was strolling in my backyard, I accidentally tripped over a pile of fish nets. “Ouch. it hurts! Wait, this is sturdy. Yes! I will use tree bark, fish nets, rags, and hemp to make paper!”

From that instant, I went into the forest frequently to collect materials such as tree bark and hemp. Then, at home, I experimented countless for new methods for making paper.

Finally, I found the perfect combination: First, I needed to soak tree bark and fish nets in water. When they were soft enough, I shredded them with a knife. Then, I would steam the ingredients, to purify the plant residues. After that, I needed to thicken the mixture by smashing it with a wooden stick. Lastly, I needed to sift a thin sheet from the mixture and leave it out to dry in the sun. When I was forty-three, I finally succeeded!

I happily told the emperor about the recipe for making paper and showed him the final product. He was overjoyed! My paper quickly spread across the empire, which gave me fame. Five years later, my ally Deng Sui told me to check on the Five Classics renewed by one hundred scholars!

The emperor rewarded me for my excellent service; he gave me the title, “Marquis of Dragon Pavilion”! Not to forget the best: I became Lord of Longting! I was extremely proud of myself.

Sadly, when Deng passed away, the Ministry of Justice ordered me to the court as I was one of the culprits in the death of the emperor's grandmother, Consort Song.

As I am old, I might as well stop writing about my lifetime. But before I stop, I want to tell everyone something: Do not think that I was born with these talents. My success all relies on hard work, perseverance and concentration.

The Invention of Paper: Beyond Oliver's Dream

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Lam, Ho Hin – 11

A long time ago, in the Han dynasty, there lived a wise man named Cai Lun. Cai was a skilled court official, and often known for his intelligence and innovative thinking. He invented an essential invention no one today can live without—paper.

Oliver was a curious little kid who hated school and homework. One day, he was frustrated by all the schoolwork and homework. He muttered, “I wonder who invented paper? I hate that guy!”

That very night, he dreamt of something special... He travelled back in time, to meet this “inventor of paper”.

Oliver fell down from the sky, and landed with a loud “bang!” on the ground. He was rather confused where he was. Then he wandered around aimlessly until he heard his stomach rumble when seeing some hawkers selling authentic Chinese cuisine. He was attracted to it like a bee to a flower, but then he realised he didn't have any money. He found an advertisement for a job to be an assistant for writers. He was very hungry so he wanted money to buy food, so he applied for the job.

After he arrived at his master's workshop, he found his master working hard and writing on a hard turtle shell. Oliver said, “Why are you so cruel killing turtles to get their shells as a parchment? It's not like you're poor. Use paper!” His master, Cai Lun, looked at him like he was an alien and told him, “There is no such thing as paper! I can't afford silk so I have to write on these hard turtle shells. Are you crazy?” The other workers laughed at Oliver and said, “Kid, of course there is a sort of parchment which is cheap and easy to write on!” with a sort of sarcasm in their voices.

Oliver's cheek was as red as a tomato and couldn't come up with a snappy comeback, but he wanted to prove them wrong. He realised that in the old days, paper wasn't even invented and he felt sorry for them, so he decided to help history. One day, he told Cai about his idea. Cai rolled his eyes and said, “Surprise surprise, it's you again. You kids nowadays are too crazy and mental. How am I supposed to make a flexible and smooth parchment using wood? Give me a break!”

Oliver was a bit taken aback from the rudeness in Cai's tone, but he didn't give up. Every day after a hard time with work, he sneaked like a mouse to Cai's library to read about the structure of trees, the history of parchments, etc. He also sometimes stared longingly out of the windows, trying to remember the structure of paper and any idea of how to create it. He regretted he didn't read more science books in the past.

Oh wait! Oliver suddenly remembered something he had read before during Science week at school. He recalled that he needed a soup that looked like toothpaste to create “paper”. But the materials needed to create such thing was only accessible by the royal family, so Oliver had to do what he needed to do.

Oliver put on a hood the next night, and sneaked away to the royal temple. He knew that if he was caught, the punishments would make school bullies look like a scrape on the knee, but he needed to do this for the sake of humanity. He swam in the deep moat to go to the temple. He was drenched and his jaw was chattering so hard that almost awoke the entire temple. He sneaked into the temple to steal the materials, but then something embarrassing happened. “Prrt” Oliver accidentally cut the cheese and alerted the guards! The guards immediately ran after him, cursing while doing so. Oliver had to think fast, so he screamed, “Ahh! A dragon!” The guards looked back for a second and Oliver ran for his life. The guards' swords even barely missed him by inches, and he hurled himself on a cart full of hay, and safely made it back to Cai's workshop.

Even though it was a bit awkward, Oliver put his pride aside and went to talk to Cai personally. Too proud to believe in a kid, Cai wanted to prove Oliver wrong, but Cai after all, was clever. He started to think about Oliver's idea seriously and realized that Oliver was actually right all along. He was also touched by what Oliver had to go through just to help him invent something. He vigorously flipped through hundreds of books, and finally came up with an idea to finally make use of tree logs and stuff to create paper. He also created tons of simple machines to slice off the barks to make them smaller and more effective.

After Cai told the emperor his and Oliver's idea, the emperor immediately fell in love with the idea and ordered his men to create millions of pieces of these so called "paper". It was cheap but also flexible, so it was suitable for ordinary people who couldn't afford the expensive silk. He realized that Oliver stole his possessions for good so he didn't punish him. Instead, he awarded Cai and Oliver many of his prized possessions, including gold and silver.

Just as Oliver was enjoying the time of his life having a feast with Cai and the emperor, his alarm clock rang and he woke up with a start. He finally knew that it was a dream and he learnt a very valuable lesson, don't take things you already have for granted. He experienced first person that life in old China wasn't easy and he had to treasure things he had now.

The whole world owes a huge gratitude to Cai as he really changed the world by his invention. For example, this invention had improved the environmental problems as using animal bones as parchments is very cruel. The legacy of him will be forever remembered through the world.

China's New Invention: AI Guide Dog

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Lee, Yee Wa Grace – 10

China has been the birthplace of numerous groundbreaking inventions. From ancient times to the present day, Chinese inventors have contributed to advancements in multitudinous fields. The following is one of the tremendous inventions from China.

Lu Ban was a renowned Chinese architect, master carpenter, structural engineer and inventor during the Zhou Dynasty. He was credited with a number of important inventions, including the cloud ladder, the saw, the grappling hook, and the first umbrella. Inspired by children using lotus leaves as rain shelters, he created an umbrella by making a flexible framework covered by a cloth. He played a significant role in the history of umbrellas. His innovative design paved the way for the evolution of umbrellas into the versatile and practical accessories that we rely on in various weather conditions. Everyone in the world needs an umbrella.

China's past inventions not only demonstrate the ingenuity and creativity of its people but also highlight the country's significant contributions to human civilization. China's legacy of invention serves as a reminder of the power of human innovation.

In one study, 80% of participants ranked vision as their most valued or dominant sense. We perceive up to 80% of our impressions by means of what we see. And eyes that protect us from dangers, but the taste and smell do not. We take vision for granted, but without vision, we struggle to learn, to walk, to read, to recognize people, to participate in school, and to work.

The population of visually handicapped people was on the rise. Teng Wei Min, former vice chairman of the China Association of the Blind, said that there are 17 million blind people in China, whereas about 9 million blind people are employed. It was not a number, but it was a crucial message to tell us there are lots of vision-impaired people we can help in China.

Guide dogs are assistance dogs trained to lead blind or visually impaired people around obstacles. However, according to the Zhengzhou Love Guide Dog Service Center, a guide dog training school, there are less than 300 guide dogs in China, leaving less than 0.001% of people with access to a guide dog in another country, such as America, where about 1% of blind people have guide dogs – it means 1000 times the ratio of China. A guide dog is more than just assistance for their user; it is also their companion, family member, and beyond. The lack of guide dogs has isolated them from the outside world. They deserve to have the choice to embrace the colorful world.

The scarcity of guide dogs is caused by various factors. In spite of this, not all dogs are suitable to be trained as guide dogs. Only rare breeds of dogs, such as the Golden Retriever, German Shepherd and Labrador, coupled with good qualities of smartness, persistence, obedience and friendliness, will be selected to be trained and become professional guide dogs. Moreover, it usually takes 1.5 to 2 years to train a qualified guide dog, with a high training cost. But the service period is low; it was between 6 and 10 years.

Chinese company Unitree Robotics recently demonstrated its consumer tech product called the Go2, an intelligent pet dog that mimics the movements of a real dog and incorporates stability control, motion coordination, obstacle avoidance and adaptive learning through AI.

I hope the Chinese inventor will invent an AI guide dog in the coming future. This robotic dog is equipped with the most advanced computer vision, sensors and cameras. By detecting objects, obstacles and hazards, it interprets the surrounding environment, analyzes complex situations and provides real-time guidance to its user. Technology seamlessly integrates with their daily needs and lives. Consequently, enhancing their quality of life.

Through combining cutting-edge technology with the innate loyalty nature of dogs. This new invention will not only assist individuals with visual impairments to navigate their surroundings safely with ease, go to school or work, and travel the world without limitation, but also get them a trustworthy companion. Furthermore, the fulfillment of happiness and joy for them and their family is priceless.

Last but not least, the demand for guide dogs is large around the world. In compare to traditional guide dogs, the AI guide dog has its own advantages. For example, it does not require feeding, grooming or veterinary care and has a long life span. It does not experience fatigue or emotional fluctuations. Apart from this, they are furless, which, in the other words, means that they won't cause any allergic reaction to their user and their family if they have allergic rhinitis or skin allergies.

In conclusion, I support the invention and development of AI in the way that assists in improving human medical needs which benefit their health.

Dreaming Back to Chang'an: A Gift from the Ancients

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Liu, Yee – 10

Xiaoming was a primary school student filled with curiosity toward science. One day, while learning about the Four Great Inventions of ancient China, he was deeply attracted by the stories of great inventions told by his teacher. Xiaoming's grandfather was an archaeologist and had once given him an ancient gift — a seemingly ordinary jade pendant. His grandfather told him that this pendant hid the wisdom of ancient China. Xiaoming wished the the pendant could bring him some exploration about the ancient China.

From then on, Xiaoming decided to try and unravel the mystery of the jade pendant with his good friend Xiaohua. One day, after finishing his homework, Xiaoming felt a bit hungry, so he used the microwave to heat up some food. Suddenly, his gaze fell on the jade pendant, and he impulsively heated it in the microwave for a minute. Amazingly, a hand-drawn map and some strange symbols appeared on the pendant. Following the map, they activated a magical symbol hidden behind a bookshelf in grandfather's study room, which unexpectedly transported Xiaoming and Xiaohua to Chang'an during the Tang Dynasty. They were astonished to find out that people there were using a very odd device called "Fantasy Unleashed" ,which could instantly create anything from food to clothing.

In the market of Chang'an, Xiaoming discovered a kiosk selling "Seeds of the Future." These seeds looked quite ordinary, but once planted, they could quickly grow into various items that people needed, such as furniture and even houses. Xiaoming realized that these seeds were a gift from future technology, a treasure prepared by the ancients for later generations.

Xiaoming and Xiaohua learned much knowledge and wisdom in Chang'an. They understood that the people there did not simply rely on technology, but harmoniously integrated it with nature, creating a sustainable society.

After helping an ancient inventor solve a difficult problem, Xiaoming and Xiaohua were given the chance to return to the modern world. On their way back, they learned that their journey through time was a practice designed by ancients to ensure the transmission of wisdom across different eras.

When back to the present, Xiaoming and Xiaohua found that the jade pendant they held had transformed into a glowing seed. They presented this seed at their school's Science Festival, and upon planting it, it quickly grew into a tree with many technologies.

Xiaoming and Xiaohua realized that the technology of the future was not out of reach. The wisdom of the ancients and modern innovation could be combined to jointly create the future. They began sharing their experiences at school, encouraging other students to unleash their imagination and creativity.

The Technological Tree, grown rapidly from the seed, was not only beautiful but also purified the air, absorbed pollutants, and even generated a small amount of clean energy. This tree became a new symbol of the school, representing innovation and environmental protection.

The story of Xiaoming and Xiaohua inspired more and more classmates to participate in scientific exploration. From improving the campus environment to designing new learning tools, everyone contributed their wisdoms. Xiaoming and Xiaohua understood something important: whether in ancient times or the modern era, the true power behind inventions comes from humanity's dream and pursuit of a better future. They decided that they would become an inventor in the future, continually exploring and innovating, contributing their knowledge to the world.

As their story spread widely, a totally new era began. China once again became a centre of global technological innovation. Their inventions were not just for China but for the future of all humanity.

New Tales of China's Inventions

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Liu, Yu Hei – 10

Sunny was going to her grandfather's home when she found out about four China's major inventions. She would never forget that trip.

Sunny's grandfather was sick so she took a basket and put some medicine and water in it and set off. On the way, she met an old man begging to have some water. Sunny pitied him and gave him some water. Suddenly, the old man stood up and a gust of strong wind blew. The wind was too strong that Sunny couldn't open her eyes and when she opened her eyes, she saw Taishang Laojun.

"Dear girl," the old man said slowly. "You have proved that you are worthy. Please, I need you to help me collect inventions in China. If you agree, then meet me here tonight with the inventions when the moon is the brightest." A gust of wind blew and Taishang Laojun was gone. Sunny wanted to ask tons of questions, and say yes to Taishang Laojun. She walked for a while when she found out she was lost. "Where am I?" Sunny said.

"Wow! What a good smell!" Sunny exclaimed. She really wanted to know where that smell came from so, she followed the smell to see people using some kind of grass to make a liquid thing. The workers looked up and saw Sunny. They introduced themselves and what they were making----tea. Suddenly, a man wearing a golden cloth with dragons on it walked out. Sunny immediately knew he was the Chinese emperor Shennong. He looked at Sunny. And said, "Can you help me solve this problem? You look smart." Sunny leaned over to see what problem the people have. She knew it, the people immediately used the leaves from the trees to make tea. But Sunny knew that tea leaves should be dry. She told this to the people. Emperor Shennong smiled at Sunny. "Well done kid! May you have one of our tea." Sunny smiled and took it. "Thanks!" she said and waved goodbye to them.

Sunny loved the tea very much, but she couldn't wait for the next adventure coming. She saw something ahead so she ran towards it. She found some people making a clay pot. She thinks it is very dirty. The people were very concentrated in their work so Sunny walked over them quietly, but still, the workers found her sneaking. After a long debate, Sunny won saying that she is good and doesn't mean any harm. So, the workers taught Sunny how to make the clay pot into a China porcelain. Sunny then helped them draw some beautiful marks on the pots. It was so beautiful that the workers gave Sunny a porcelain. Sunny thanked them and set off again.

"This cloth is amazing! But I think we have one more thing missing. Everything just can't go right!" Who is saying that? Sunny crept closer and saw a gorgeous woman wearing a beautiful silk. "That must be Princess Xi Lingshi!" Sunny thought. Princess Xi Lingshi spotted Sunny and pointed at her, "You there, please help me! If you can, I will reward you!" Sunny did not want a reward but she wanted to help people, so she went to the princess. "What is the matter?" Sunny asked. "My silk dress is very gorgeous but my hairstyle isn't! I have to go to a meeting today and I won't if I can't have my hair done!" the princess wailed. Sunny thought for a while and said eventually, "Well then, here's my only hair clip with a butterfly on it. Please take it." The princess took it and put it on her hair. "It's perfect! Now, you have helped me a lot, please take a roll of silk back." Sunny thanked the princess and left. She looked at the things she received. She found out that all three of them are China's inventions, that means there is one more to find. But it is almost dark, she has to hurry!

"Kites? Where do people have kites?" Sunny was almost at the end of her journey when she saw a bunch of kites in the sky. "Come on everyone! Look! It's flying!" a person said loudly. Sunny squeezed herself into a group of people and watched. It's philosophers Mozi and Lu Ban! Sunny knew this was the last object she needed. But how can she have one? Then she heard, "If you want to make a kite, come here!" Awesome! She could make one! Sunny made a kite quickly and set off to find Taishang Laojun.

She ran back to where she met him. It was midnight already. Sunny finally stopped and she sat down on a rock. She looked up on the sky and there was it, there was where the moon was the brightest. Then she saw Taishang Laojun. Taishang Laojun saw the inventions Sunny was holding. He smiled. Sunny handed them over and Taishang Laojun said, "Good worthy child, you have done your thing. Now, I must grant you a wish. What do you wish for?" Sunny suddenly remembered her grandfather. She told Taishang Laojun about it and told him she doesn't have time. Taishang Laojun nodded and said to Sunny, "May the time go back to help this worthy child." And disappeared. Strong wind blew and it was day time again. Sunny looked at her watch: 10:56 a.m.? Time did go back! Sunny smiled and skipped all the way to her grandfather's home. "What an exciting day!" She sighed cheerfully to herself.

New Tales of China's Inventions

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Ng, Yan Kiu Audrey – 10

It was the Christmas Eve of 2003. To prepare for a school project, Ali and Barbara, a pair of inseparable twins worked so hard to learn about China's remarkable inventions. As they dived into the depths of research, a mysterious force awakened. In an instant, Ali and Barbara were given the power of time travel! They were transported across the ages and embarked on an exciting journey through history, where they would witness the very origin of China's groundbreaking inventions!

Ali and Barbara's first stop was ancient China. Illuminated by the gentle glow of an oil lamp, they found themselves in the company of Cai Lun, a courtier in the Han Dynasty. With skilled precision, Cai Lun skillfully twisted together fibers to give birth to a revolutionary creation: Paper! "Whoa, Ali, look at this! Can you believe that Cai Lun just created paper from those fibers?" Barbara exclaimed in admiration. "Yeah, it's incredible! Imagine how much easier it will be to write from now on," Ali replied with excitement. Ali and Barbara knew that this invention would forever change the path of human knowledge and communication.

Next, Ali and Barbara found themselves in a busy street of Chang'an, surrounded by a strong smell of ink. There, they encountered Bi Sheng, who was diligently carving complicated characters onto some wooden blocks. Ali asked, "How long does it take to carve all those characters?" Bi Sheng smiled and replied, "It requires patience. Yet once it's done, we can print countless copies in no time!" Filled with anticipation, Ali and Barbara witnessed printing coming to life. From this moment, the world opened its arms to millions of stories and wisdom, and forever indebted to this remarkable invention!

Ali and Barbara's journey then drove them into a later point of time, 2023. At a train platform, they eagerly boarded a streamlined and modern-looking train. The high-speed train hurtling through the countryside at an astonishing speed! "Oh Barbara, just imagine how much time we'll save when we travel on this train!" Ali remarked, "Such high-speed railway network invented by China not only fostered economic growth, but also united the nation with seamless efficiency!"

After getting off from the train, Ali and Barbara walked into a wet market in hope of buying some food. They witnessed a surprising phenomenon – people here were effortlessly doing transactions with a wave of their cell phones! The wonders of how Chinese people using mobile payment systems really enchanted the twin time travelers. Ali turned to Barbara and said "This technology is incredible! It's so convenient and efficient!" Barbara nodded in agreement and replied, "Let's say goodbye to the days of carrying cash!"

As Ali and Barbara's journey came near its end, they stood in amazement of China's remarkable inventions that changed the world history! From the ancient papermaking and printing to the revolutionary high-speed railway network and mobile payment systems, China's pioneering spirit had contributed so much to humanity through time. Inspired by the past and driven by the future, Ali and Barbara were confident that the legacy of China's inventions would continue to inspire generations to come.

Lunar Flying Capsule

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Tse, Sharon – 10

“Mollie, what makes you call me in this early morning?”

“Patient 193 Susan will need an emergency surgery in 10 minutes. Please arrive in 5 minutes. See you at room 132. Bye!”

This is year 2050. I was about to get up this morning, my smartphone rang. It was 5:00 a.m. It was a call from my doctor partner. I threw my phone into my bag and hurried into the bathroom and then to my dressing room. I polished off a few cookies and some lemonade, then stepped out.

“Tecna, go to ST hospital now!” I got in and commanded my “Lunar Flying Capsule”.

The “Lunar Flying Capsule” took off. Within a minute, I arrived at the rooftop of ST hospital. Fortunately, I was able to make it on time. I rushed into room 132 and put on my gloves and my mask.

“Give me the tweezers, scissors and suckers.” I demanded. I performed Susan’s surgery. The surgery was very successful and Susan is fine.

Back in 2030, when I was 16 years old, I watched the news on the television.

“Three Chinese astronauts went to space at 5:26 p.m. Their mission is to go to the Moon to explore and bring back some lunar soil and stones.”

“Wow! Those astronauts are just like Chang’e flying to the moon! No wonder the spacecraft is called Chang’e! How wonderful is that!” I was really excited and proud.

“Next, a death was reported from the WH hospital. Because of traffic jam, the victim couldn’t arrive at the hospital in time and passed away.” I was really upset that time and thought, “What a wretched news! If the paramedics have wings to send the victim to the hospital in time, he could be saved. It’s all because of that stupid traffic jam!” I was so mad that I stomped my feet hard on the floor at that moment.

A year later, the three Chinese astronauts returned back to the Earth and brought back 3127 g of lunar soil and stones with them. When a group of astronomers were surveying the lunar soil and rocks the astronauts brought back, something that was shiny and white in the lunar soil caught their eyes.

“Such an enormous and gorgeous pearl!” They found a white stone that looked like a pearl, but much bigger.

“Ahh!” An astronomer split some green tea on the stone accidentally. A miracle happened.

“Oh dear! See what’s going on here!”

“Oh, my goodness! Am I dreaming?”

“Unbelievable!”

The white stone floated in the air and hovered around the astronomers. The astronomers watched in disbelief. One of them quickly snatched the flying stone down. They perform detailed examinations.

“After three months of examination, the astronomers verified that this stone was a precious lunar flying stone. This special mineral will fly in the air if it contacts green tea,” the news broadcast.

In 2035, I checked out some information about the lunar flying stone: after extensive experiments and research, the Chinese scientists invented this flying machine called the “Lunar Flying Capsule” out of lithium and the lunar flying stone with a maximal speed of 500 km per hour. However, the prototype can only fly for about 5 minutes.

“That was fast. But it can only fly about 40 km.” I muttered.

Since then, when astronauts went to the Moon, they collected many flying stones and brought them back to the Earth. In 2040, after extensive research, a group of scientists from the National University of Defence Technology solved the final puzzle. With cutting edge nuclear technology, they successfully synthesized the lunar flying stone. As a result, we don't need to go to the Moon to collect the stones. Mass production of the flying stone makes the flying machine available for possible domestic use.

Due to limitation in the flying time, the "Lunar Flying Capsule" can only fly for a short distance. To solve this problem, the scientists were searching for the best fuel. They tried out all kinds of different green teas, including Jasmine, Sencha, Matcha, Genmaicha, ...etc. Finally, in 2045, the scientists found that the best fuel for the "Lunar Flying Capsule" was West Lake Longjing. With one litre from West Lake Longjing, the capsule could fly continuously for 24 hours. This discovery was the game changer. Since then, all Chinese citizens have access to this Hi-tech transportation.

"Sounds great! I am going to buy one since it only cost \$100,000."

Now, I am getting into my third generation "Lunar Flying Capsule" with a whooping maximal speed at 5000 km per hour! I am expected to arrive at Vienna in less than two hours to attend my sister, Sherry's concert at the Vienna Musikverein. My sister is a world-renowned violinist who will perform the Butterfly Lovers violin concerto with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

"Tecna, go to Vienna Musikverein as fast as possible. Play Debussy Arabesque." I commanded. Arabesque is my favourite piece and I am always relaxed when I am listening to this beautiful piano piece.

With the help of the "Satellite Harmony Navigation" system, the "Lunar Flying Capsule" takes off automatically. Then, the HW sound box starts playing Arabesque by Lang Lang while I am taking a nap. I am not worried about any traffic accident, as the navigation system has a perfect record of zero accident since it was launched two years ago.

"Good afternoon, Miss Sharon. It is 2:30 in the afternoon now. The drive to Vienna Musikverein is about 1 hour and 45 minutes. We will arrive there at about 3:15 in the afternoon. The weather in Vienna is 15°C-18°C. It is drizzling in Vienna. Please take an umbrella from the cabinet here. There are some drinks and snacks in the fridge. You can heat them up in the microwave. The "Lunar Flying Capsule" will take off in a minute. Thank you." Tecna uttered. Then it flew off to Vienna Musikverein...

New Tales of China's Inventions

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Wong, Tsz Kwan – 10

'What topic should I do?' Jonathan pondered, his brows furrowed with concern. He had an assignment deadline tomorrow, and he had not settled on a topic. The assignment was about China's inventions. His teacher mentioned explicitly they could not write about the four great inventions. He had been racking his brains but hardly came up with any other well-known inventions beyond the Compass, Papermaking, Gunpowder and Printing.

While lost in deep thought, Jonathan was startled by his sister, Jenny who ran home in a hurry. She was soaking wet! He had not noticed the heavy rain until this moment. It was then his eyes fell upon the umbrellas next to the front door while Jenny was drying herself. 'What's on your mind?' Jenny asked curiously. Jonathan thought once again. He recalled umbrellas were originally invented in China. But who invented them, and how did they get the idea? The more he thought about it, the more curious he got. He decided to visit his best friend, Joseph who had the extraordinary power to travel through time, and maybe he could help to explore.

When Jonathan arrived at Joseph's house, he saw Joseph gazing out of the window. He clearly did not know how to do the assignment too. Jonathan told Joseph about the umbrellas idea. After a bit of discussion, Joseph agreed to go to the past to learn more about the inventor. Without hesitation, Joseph grabbed Jonathan's hand walking towards his magic mirror. They were whisked away in a second after a flash, travelling almost three thousand and five hundred years back in time.

Joseph and Jonathan landed on a tree, but then both of them lost their grip and tumbled down to the ground in front of a passerby. He was in shock by their sudden appearance. Without questioning and seeing them in great pain, the man brought them home. As they made their way, their peculiar clothing caught the attention of other village people who whispered amongst themselves these two boys might be wanderers from distant places.

It was not long they arrived the man's house. It was huge and nicely built from wood! He led Joseph and Jonathan to a room and provided them with clean clothes. Shortly after, the man's wife returned home and greeted the boys kindly. She made them all a delicious vegetable stew. As they sat down to eat, the man introduced himself, 'my name is Lu Ban and my wife is Yun. We live here for a long time and I am a carpenter. Please make yourselves at home.' Jonathan was astonished by the name and could not help wondering, 'Wait! Was he the famous inventor from ancient China?'. He got confirmed through chatting with the couple after dinner.

The boys decided to stay longer at Lu Ban's house, trying to understand more on this great inventor. Lu Ban went out for work every day. Yun had to prepare meals for him therefore. She had to walk a long way no matter it was sunny or rainy days. Lu Ban built some pavilions on the way for her to rest however it was still hard for Yun. One day, she went back in fatigue. 'I wish I had a movable pavilion,' Yun told Jonathan and Joseph. 'My husband is a hard-working man so he always has to work all day outside, it will be fabulous if there is a portable thing for this purpose. Maybe I can invent something...', Yun kept on saying. Jonathan gasped and whispered to Joseph, 'She might be the inventor of umbrellas!' Joseph nodded. 'Yun, maybe you could invent something for your husband! Something that is easy to bring and collapsible which allows Lu Ban walk in the rain without getting wet!' Jonathan suggested. Yun stared at them and exclaimed, 'That's a brilliant idea! I'll work on it right now!' Joseph and Jonathan felt excited about helping her invent something for the entire world. Yun started to design and trimmed thin the bamboo for the umbrella framework, then mounted onto it animal skin.

Suddenly a red light blinking from Joseph's pocket. It was the alert signal of his travel clock. It was time to leave or else they could not return back! After thanking the wife for everything, the boys went to a safe place where no one was watching, and Joseph took Jonathan's hand and they time travelled back to the present. In a flash, they were back to the Joseph's room. Time had not passed because of Joseph's time travel ability, which also allowed him to stop it while they're travelling in time. They both smiled at each other and realized Lu Ban's wife was the one invented the umbrella. It was an amazing journey and both Jonathan and Joseph was excited to meet Yun and contributed idea to her umbrella invention. It was sunset, they both went home happily to finish their assignment.

“People in China are often smart and hardworking, as long as they could get a hint, they’ll be able to make useful inventions that everyone uses for their daily life ...” Jonathan wrote on his assignment.

New Tales of China's Inventions

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Yeung, Joy Nam – 11

Once upon a time, in a faraway land, a little boy named James loved hearing stories about incredible inventions from China. He always dreamed of inventing something special himself. One day, James found an old scroll in his grandpa's attic. It had pictures and words about forgotten inventions from China. James' eyes flash with excitement as he read about these amazing things and the clever people who made them. The Four Great Inventions of old China fascinated James the most. They were papermaking, printing, gunpowder, and the compass. He imagined how these inventions changed people's lives long ago. James was determined to bring back these forgotten inventions. He read old books, talked to smart people, and even visited faraway villages in search of clues.

After lots of trying, James learned how to make paper, just like in the olden days. He felt so proud when he held his first piece of handmade paper. Inspired by his success, James decided to teach others how to make it too. James taught the villagers how to make paper from scratch. They were so happy to learn this new skill. With the paper, they could draw pretty pictures, write letters, and keep their stories alive. James' paper became famous all over the world, and people came from near and far to see it.

Buoyed by his effort, James moved on to the next invention: printing. He brought talented artists together and they made prints using carved wooden blocks. The prints looked like magic! News quickly spread about James' amazing prints. People came from all over to see them. James prints decorated homes, temples, and even the emperor's palace.

Now, James turned his attention to another invention: gunpowder. But he wanted to use it for fun, not harm. James used gunpowder to create fantastic fireworks. The fireworks painted the sky with brilliant colours and example James' fireworks were so incredible that people gathered all around to celebrate. His displays brought joy and excitement to everyone. People laughed, danced, and made wishes as they watched the fireworks light up the night sky.

With newfound confidence, James explored the invention of the compass from the old scroll. He built a strong ship and with a brave crew, he set sail to discover new lands, guided by the compass. James and his crew sailed for many days. With the compass leading the way, they found new places and met new people. Their adventurous journeys allowed for trading and sharing of cultures on a big scale. James's story of his inventions became legendary. It taught people about the power of imagination, sharing knowledge, and making dreams come true.

And so, James' adventures joined the New Tales of China's Inventions. They reminded everyone that they too can invent amazing things and make the world a better place, just like James did long ago.

China's New Inventions

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Yu, Man To – 10

Everything in our lives are all inventions from different, ingenious inventors all around the world.

However, have you thought of what would be invented next? Today, I am going to share my thoughts.

Firstly, we need to know if what we think that hasn't been invented yet are actually already in real life. Like a robot-functioned restaurant, though this is already true. Japan has a lot of these restaurants. Or in some cases, it might not be in the real world, but with the technology, it can be invented by anybody. Like robot-functioned grocery stores or bars. Inventions coming in the next few years must be insane, so insane that no one will even think about until it is already shown to the public.

I think that my following thought might be invented in the future :

It is not some ordinary invention. It isn't even an item! It is a type of extreme protective layer material. Yes, you might have heard of this in sci-fi stories. Force Fields. That's right! You might ask why would anybody invent that. And that's because of war. War? Yes, although now the world seems peaceful, wars still exist. Countries might fight against another one due to confrontation or conflicts. And by now, more deadly weapons were invented. Such as bombs, more deadly tanks, bullets and guns. These can explode and cause deadly damage to a specific area. Now the people in that area will face different dangers, such as an air-strike or an ambush. Moreover, homes and nearby facilities will be destroyed. Some crucial supplies such as water or food supply will be suspended. Giving an extreme time for those people to survive.

However, with the force field—most commonly know for a heavy layer of protection that almost can't be destroyed, would save millions of people that are facing dangers caused by war.

I will now explain why this invention getting invented has a high possibility.

Due to it's fact that it is extremely protective and can be turned on and off at any time and doesn't use any energy, it is considerable to be invented. With this energy force-field, war will go extinct! It will save lives! And it also can be shaped in anyway, any shape, and any size! Even if there is still wars happening, there is completely no point as nothing would happen if a country's army just stayed in an area getting protected by the force-field. Although the space might seem confined, just turn it off and everyone can go explore this wonderful galaxy and world. Though military soldiers or training centers are no longer needed, this also gives more room for more facilities for the citizens. Such as different factorys.

Hopefully this invention will be invented to have a peaceful world where there is completely no violence like wars. This way, anybody are ensured to be safe from enemy countries.

Cai Lun's bold but effective decision

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Yung, Wui Yan – 11

It was Emperor Ming's anniversary coronation. The whole country was in festival vibe. Decorations were over every corner of palace. Tones of tributes and gifts from other countries formed a long queue from entering the palace. Emperor Ming was ecstatic and the officials were busy to record the tributes and its country. Every government official must bring a present to celebrate. However, a Chinese official Cai Lun was panicking as he did not prepare a gift for him due to heavy workload. When the coronation began, he sat in an unnoticeable place, hoping not to be spotted by the emperor.

Emperor Ming invited messengers from neighboring countries to attend his party. They gave precious jewels and gold accessories with detailed craftsmanship. Except one Egyptian messenger handed a dilapidated wooden box. The emperor ordered, "Open it!" The Egyptian messenger opened it dilatorily. Against all expectations, there were neither jewels nor gold bricks. But rolls of cloth-like fiber.

One of the government officials grumbled, "Hoe dare the Egyptians! Such rude and impolite people they are!" When the Emperor heard this, he summoned knights to seize the messenger.

Cai Lun seemed to be tranquil and pleaded for him, "Your majesty, let him explain about this present!" The emperor nodded.

The Egypt messenger sneered at them, "Our pharaoh told me to send this gift because your country is uncivilized and foolish! You don't even have papyrus!"

Cai Lun and the other officials were irritated. He could not bear the anger so he stood up and shouted, "You think you Egyptians are smartest? China can't be affronted by Egypt! I promise! I will invent a stuff which is much better than papyrus!"

The emperor clapped his hands and everyone applauded. He announced, "Cai Lun, you will have three months to make your invention. Otherwise, there will be punishments!"

The Egyptian messenger interrupted, 'If your invention is successful, don't forget to send some to our pharaoh. Our pharaoh might use your invention instead of our papyrus. We are "looking forward" to receiving your invention very soon.' He said it as he laughed.

After the coronation ended, Cai Lun asked the haughty messenger, "What is the papyrus made up of?"

He replied, "I am going to tell you as It's not a secret – Nile grass. However, this plant can only be found in Egypt."

Cai Lun sighed, "Thanks." He then left quietly.

Cai Lun was thinking of the material he needed to replace Nile grass. He walked along the path and finally arrived at a pier. Cai Lun saw many fishermen were busy offloading their catch.

"This fishing net is broken. I guess I have to throw it away." said a fisherman.

Cai Lun looked at the net and stopped him, "May I have a look?"

"Sure," said the fisherman.

Cai Lun stretched the net and found that the fishing net was tough and durable. He then asked the fisherman if he could take away the net. The fisherman kindly agreed and Cai Lun hurried back to find more ingredients. While he was rushing to his office, he walked past a timber factory. The workers gave marks by paints on each tree trunk before they were sent to the boat. Cai Lun thought the tree bark would play an important role in his invention.

After grinding the fishing net and tree bark, the mixture was easy to roll and blend. However, Cai Lun found that it was not suitable for writing. The words would be faded out after short period of time. Cai Lun tried different ratio of missing fishing net and tree bark, but the results were the same.

As time was running out, Cai Lun could not create a product that could compare to the papyrus. He was afraid that the emperor would sentence him to dead punishment.

“I need to take a break,” said Cai Lun.

Cai Lun went out for a drink in a restaurant. While he was enjoying the wine, A woman and a child sat next to Cai Lun broke the silence.

“Be careful my son, your clothes were soiled by soy sauce. They cannot be cleaned up.” said an angry mother.

Cai Lun suddenly realized that he has found the last piece of puzzle. The last material he was searching for a long time was a cloth! He went back to his workshop and started mixing the cloth, fishing net and tree bark together. The product was satisfactory and matched the requirements. Cai Lun immediately sent the product to Emperor Ming.

Emperor Ming was over the moon and ordered Cai Lun to produce more.

“You not only defend our reputation, but also invent a treasure that is essential to our civilization,” said the emperor.

The Emperor Ming finally named the product as “Cai Paper” in order to praise and honor the effort of Cai Lun.

The First Time Machine

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Xiao, Jiachen – 11

When I slept until I woke up by naturally on Monday, it was 6:30 am and it was just on time to go to the school, so I felt that I was the luckiest person in the whole world, but my good mood didn't last long --- The next moment, I found that I suddenly time travelled to the year of 2124. As I looked at my surroundings, I realized that I had stumbled upon a remarkable historic invention --- the Time Machine. It stood before me, a sleek dark sophisticated machine radiating an aura of profound power and mystery. There was a small sign next to the Time Machine: Made in China (the very first one). So, China was the first country that had invented it! How amazing!

Filled with excitement and wonder, I approached to the Time Machine, and I was eager to learn more about its functionalities and capabilities. The attention to details and precision in its construction reflected the high standards of Chinese craftsmanship. It looked like a black ball or sphere, the diameter of which was around 2 meters. There was a small door on the ball which could let people in and out. Entering the ball, I could see a quantum computer in the middle and there was a nuclear energy reactor on the left, and the left side was the passenger cockpit. I climbed into the cockpit and now I could see everything in the cockpit. At the centre of it, it was a large, ergonomic console with an array of touchscreens, buttons, and tactile controls. Travellers can use the controls to set the destination time and adjust the parameters of the machine.

With a mixture of excitement and trepidation, I plucked up the courage and embark on a journey through time. I set the target date to Jan 8, 2024(Monday), which was the exact date when I previously time travelled, and prepared myself for the temporal leap that awaited me. The Time Machine started running, and in an instant, I found myself hurtling through the time vortex, leaving the year 2124 behind.

As I journeyed back to the year 2024, I carried with me the design of the historic time machine invention. I was so excited that it would not only open doors to the wonders of time travel but also reshape the perception of China's technological capabilities on the global stage. Eager to introduce the Time Machine theory and design to the Chinese scientists, I pretended that I was really a person from 2124 and explained the nature of my journey and revealed the existence of the Time Machine. Scepticism and disbelief initially greeted my claims, but I didn't care as I provided evidence and demonstrated the time machine's capabilities, doubts quickly transformed into admiration. Chinese Scientists quickly built a real time machine under my supervision and guidance.

The implications of time travel sparked intense discussions and debates among scientists. Ethical concerns arose, as the ability to alter the past could have unforeseen consequences for the future. Governments and organizations around the world grappled with the question of how to regulate and control such a powerful technology.

Despite the scepticism and challenges, the Time Machine captured the imagination of people worldwide. It provided a glimpse into possible futures, enabling scientists to explore potential outcomes and make more informed decisions. It allowed historians to witness historical events first-hand, revolutionising the study of the past. The Time Machine not just became a symbol of human progress and curiosity, a testament to our unyielding desire to explore the unknown, it had also showed that China's technology is improving like flying.

My unexpected journey to the year 2124 allowed me to witness the extraordinary achievements of China's technological prowess. The Time Machine, proudly "Made in China," showcased our nation's commitment to push the boundaries of scientific exploration. Its advanced features, intuitive controls, and seamless integration of technologies left an indelible impression on me. I eagerly shared this remarkable invention with the world, praising China's technological leadership and inspiring global admiration. As I returned to 2024, I carried with me the belief that China's contributions to science and technology would continue to shape the future, igniting a spirit of innovation and collaboration worldwide.

I believe and I hope, in the year 2044, I am going to become a real scientist, inventing lots of new innovative things and making substantial scientific contributions to China and to the world by myself without any

help from travelling to the future with the time machine! Oh, I hope that I don't need to wake up at 6:30 am at that time!

The Future Delivery Dog

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Zhang, Tian Luo – 11

After school that day, I felt a bit down. My long-awaited new Air Jordans (shoes) still hadn't arrived. I asked my mom to check online, and to our dismay, we couldn't even find a signal for the delivery. Mom immediately contacted Amazon customer service, and they informed us that my package was lost due to an accident. I yelled out in frustration, then ran to the living room, and fell asleep on the sofa.

In my dream, I started watching Netflix. Just as the show was getting exciting, the doorbell rang. I thought my parents would answer it, but then I remembered they were out at the dentist. Reluctantly, I opened the door and to my astonishment, there was a yellow robot dog with a transparent glass dome on its head, revealing lots of wires. Even more surprising, it had the Air Jordans I had ordered in a plastic basket. Confused, I asked, "Why are you at my door, and why do you have the Air Jordans I ordered four weeks ago, you robot?" The robot dog replied politely, "I am Bob, Amazon's experimental delivery robot dog. You are the first customer to receive a delivery from me. This is your package." It said, opening the basket it carried. I took the shoes out with delight. I suggested to it, "Could you tell Amazon to change your head to something that's not transparent? it's a little bit creepy." Bob replied in a somewhat humorous tone, "Recorded, I will show this footage to the CEO of Amazon." I ended the conversation and told Bob never to come back again until its head was changed. Then I woke up and realized it was just a dream. "Oh man, why is it just a dream?" I muttered to myself. But to my surprise, I saw the Air Jordans I had been dreaming of on my desk. "Surprise!" my parents shouted almost simultaneously. "We knew you were feeling down about not getting the Air Jordans, so we got them for you after our dental check-up!" Mom said. "THANKS, MOM AND DAD!" I shouted gratefully.

Later, I told my parents about my dream, and dad said, "Listen, I think Bob the robot dog could actually be invented. With artificial intelligence evolving rapidly, it's inspiring many companies to design more robots. Boston Dynamics recently invented the robot dog Spot. Spot is a four-legged robot capable of moving across various terrains. It uses multiple sensors and three motors in each leg for navigation, balance, and posture adjustment." Inspired by my dad's words, I had an idea: "Maybe I should be the one to invent a perfect delivery system!" So, I got to work, wrote a paragraph, and planned to show it to my dad the next day.

The next day, dad read aloud, "The delivery workers will put Spot and a drone on a self-driving truck. Then, the truck will drive to the buyer's house. After that, the drone will fly out of the truck to check if the buyer's house is a mansion or an apartment. If it's a mansion, the drone will drop the package in the garden. If it's an apartment, Spot will carry the package in its basket, take the elevator, and deliver it to the buyer's door. It will then stand up, ring the doorbell, open the basket for the buyer to take their package, and then run back to the delivery truck, and get ready for the next delivery. Wow, great thinking, this could really work!" "As artificial intelligence evolves quickly, there will soon be robots everywhere, from home helpers to robot nurses in hospitals! Take robot helpers, for example. They will cook breakfast for us after charging overnight while we sleep. Then, they will go to the market to buy ingredients for both lunch and dinner. Afterwards, they will prepare lunch for the elderly at home. When the elderly finishes eating and starts to take a nap, the robots will charge for two more hours, then, they will start cooking dinner. Once all family members are at the dining area, they will serve the dishes. While we eat, they will mop the floor and charge for another ten hours." I added.

As I finished sharing my ideas with my dad, he looked at me with a smile and said, "You know, your dream might not be too far from reality. With the pace at which technology is advancing, the kind of inventions you're imagining could soon come to life. Companies around the world are already experimenting with robotics and artificial intelligence to make our lives easier and more efficient. Your idea of a delivery robot dog like Bob, and the helpful home robots, might seem like a dream now, but they could be part of our everyday lives sooner than we think."

This thought excited me. The world of technology is always full of surprises, and it's amazing to think that a dream or an idea can turn into reality with the right amount of creativity and innovation. Maybe one day, I'll see a robot dog like Bob trotting down the street, delivering packages, or a friendly robot helper making dinner in a neighbor's house. The possibilities are endless, and it's thrilling to imagine that we are on the cusp of such a futuristic world. Who knows, maybe I'll be one of the inventors who help make these dreams come true!

As I went to bed that night, I couldn't help but feel a sense of wonder and excitement for the future. In a world where dreams and reality merge, the future inventions like Bob the delivery dog and home helper robots are not just fantasies; they are glimpses into what tomorrow might bring. And I, for one, can't wait to see it.

The Compass

Malvern College Hong Kong, Hung, Po Yiu Leanne – 10

It was in the middle of spring, and the golden sun shone down on the fresh green grass along with the riot colors of blooming flowers. The breeze blew across the land and the birds sang with it.

“Mom, we can have the picnic here!” Carl exclaimed jumping up and down near a crystal-clear stream. “Sure, why not,” Mom answered, “and while I am preparing the picnic, you and your Dad can go play.” While Mom was busy setting up the picnic under the radiant blue sky, Carl and Dad went playing hide-and-seek.

“Okay Carl, I will count and you hide,” Dad said, “10, 9, 8.....”

Carl began pacing through the long green grass, desperately finding somewhere to hide, in panic, he rushed towards the forest nearby.

“Times up Carl, I’m coming to find you!” Dad did all he could to find him, but eventually, he finally gave up and shouted for Carl.

“Carl I give up, you can come out now!”

There was no response. Dad tried multiple times, louder every time, still, nothing.

“I can’t find Carl!” Dad hollered at Mom, who turned around in shock.

Carl wandered around in the forest, exploring the environment. The trees were not very big, most of them were still growing. Looking up at the sky, he saw birds pass by. He strolled on and on and on but sooner or later, he realized something else apart from his forest surroundings, he was lost, in the forest, not knowing how to go back. Trying his best, he walked around for ages, maybe even hours in confusion, fright and worry. Slowly he came to a halt, more scared than ever.

“I’m lost.” he whispered with tears welling up in his eyes. Those tears slowly rolled down his cheeks and hit the grassy forest floor. He curled up near a tall tree, and let those tears fall. Carl cried for ages, shaking, wanting to go home.

“I want to go home and I want my parents.” His lips quivered.

“Excuse me?” A soft voice said, up in the tree, “Are you okay?”

“Huh?” Carl looked up, to his surprise he saw a tiny, elegant fairy sitting on the tree branch. “Ah! What are you?! Who are you?! Am I seeing things?”

“No,” The fairy huffed, slightly offended. “I am Willow, this is my home and these are my friends.” Suddenly more fairies and elves appeared from inside of the tree hole.

“Wow! Fairies and elves really exist and living in a tree, that is amazing! Anyways I really need your help,” Carl lowered his head, “I got lost in this forest and I don’t know how to get back.”

“Oh...” They responded.

“We can help you!” A young fairy piped, “We can give you our compass.”

Three elves came out of the tree hole, carrying a small round disk above their heads, and they slowly placed it Carl’s hands.

“This is our compass, we found it on the forest floor many, many years ago.”

Carl looked at the old dusty compass in his hands, the outer ring was a metallic navy blue, and on the back there were golden Chinese engravings.

“Wow thank you, but um how do I use it?” He replied sheepishly.

“A compass works by detecting and responding to the Earth’s magnetic fields,” Willow explained, “It can help you if your lost, and it doesn’t need the internet, batteries or Wi-Fi! You use a map and the compass to find your way around. The red needle points North no matter the direction, you can find the other cardinal directions using North.”

More elves and fairies came bringing a yellowish map of the area and handed it over.

“I came from the meadow, and the red needle is pointing North, the meadow is Northeast. Okay, I got it. Thank you so much Willow and friends for helping me, I can continue by myself now, and again, thanks a lot!”

Carl, now using the compass, walked towards the meadow as the fairies and elves waved goodbye. The smell of wet earth soothed his mind, and the wind blew across his face. Not long later, he could hear the sound of the trickling stream and his parents’ discouraged call.

“Mom, Dad!” Carl shouted, running as fast as his legs could carry him, then tumbling back out into the meadow’s soft long grass.

“Carl, oh my god, where on Earth did you go?! You scared us half death!” Mom said in disbelief.

“I got lost in the forest, until the fairies and elves helped me.”

“Fairies? Elves? Are you okay? Well it doesn’t matter, as long as you’re safe.” Dad said sighing in relief.

“Yeah...” Carl replied, still thinking about Willow and her friends. “I will never forget about them....”

<<<<RING RING>>>>

Carl opened his drowsy eyes, yawning and stretching. He found himself sitting in his normal, snug and comfy bed.

“Oh, I was dreaming...”

Carl slowly crawled out of his bed, intrigued about the history of the compass. He opened his iPad and started his research...

The compass was invented in 206 BC, the Chinese first used it as a tool for geomancy and fortune telling.... It's a device that indicates direction and is one of the most important devices for navigation. The compass has allowed more accurate navigation, leading to better exploration, trade and spread of ideas from different cultures. This invention also made it possible to determine directions when your surroundings are unclear (foggy, hazy, heavy rain). Compasses work by responding towards the Earth's magnetic fields. It can be used anywhere, anytime and even underwater!

“Carl, your breakfast is ready, and why are you using your iPad this early in the morning?” Mom called from downstairs.

“Okay sorry, I'll come down.” He closed his iPad and raced down the wooden stairs.

Lava Chase

Malvern College Hong Kong, Lam, Sze Long Adriel – 8

One day in the year 2431, there was a young, tall, and strong man called Alex who lived in a small village near an odd-looking mountain on an island. He had just finished unwrapping his birthday presents in his house and he had got an actual hoverboard! There were LED lights on the side. He immediately called his friend Mike. “You really got one?” asked Mike. “Of course! Why would I be lying?” answered Alex. “You lie all the time. You said you went skydiving, but you actually had homework to do, and you didn’t go out!” said Mike. “Where was it made from?” asked Mike. “China has just invented it! I will go test ride this thing and see if it works or not. Bye!” replied Alex.

Alex went outside and got on the hoverboard. He was smiling. He clicked the ‘on’ button it was cool to the touch, he began hovering in the air! “Wow!” exclaimed Alex. He leaned forward and he started moving forward. He leaned right and he started moving right. He leaned backwards and he started moving backwards. Suddenly Alex heard a rumbling sound, he thought it was from his stomach, so he went inside his house to grab some food. He was almost done with the burger when he heard another rumble and a loud KABOOM! Alex looked out the window and saw lava oozing down towards the village. The ground was shaking so much that the chandelier dropped and shattered! A piece of glass cut Alex on the leg. Alex screamed in fright and in pain. The speakers around the village told the villagers to get to an Escape Speed Boat. He immediately got on his hoverboard and floated towards the boat. However, the lava was catching up to Alex. He thought he was going to die! After a few seconds, he found that he did not burn to death as his hoverboard floated above the lava! It was so hot Alex thought he was going to melt.

On the boat, Mike also saw that the lava had covered most of the houses and only the chimneys were left. He was trying to contact Alex with his phone, but. He did not pick up. Alex saw that he was going to crash into a chimney, so he leaned right and avoided the chimney. The lava smelled like rotten eggs. He thought why does lava smell like that. Both the smoke and smell made it hard to breathe. Ashes flew around in the wind. Alex hit the ‘accelerate’ button and he began speeding towards the escape speed boat. A handful of ash flew into Alex’s mouth. He tasted the burnt ashes, and it was so disgusting. The lava had not reached the water yet, so the speed boat was still there.

When Alex saw the boat, Mike was already on the boat, but it was full of villagers already. Mike shouted at the top of his lungs, “Alex, go to the big city, that’s where you can find us. Use your hoverboard to hover on the water and lava!” Then the speed boat zoomed away. Alex hovered off the island and started floating above the water. He felt relieved as he was safe from the lava at last. At the same time, he felt depressed because he knew he had to move away from his village for a few years. He looked behind him, the lava had turned the water into obsidian making a new surface for the lava to spread on. “Oh no, the speed boat was going to burn if it did not reach the city in 20 minutes!”, Alex thought to himself.

The lava had nearly reached Alex and it smelled like rotten eggs again. Alex hated the smell and he knew that he had to rush to the city immediately or he would die. He found there was a ‘maximum speed’ button on his hoverboard, so he pressed on the button. When he got to the city, the government helped him find the rest of the survivors. He found out that his parents, Mike and the villagers were safe. He was so happy about that. The government provided them with food and shelters to stay in since they had lost their homes. BBC News said the whole village had been destroyed by the volcanic eruption.

By the year 2439, the government of the city announced that the island was safe to go back to. The villagers hoped to move back as the government had promised to help them rebuild their village. Now, the village has a lot of beautiful houses which are still empty, the mayor of the city tries his best to attract more people to live on the island so that the lives of the villages can return to normal again.

Back at the village, Alex was sitting on the couch when he heard a rumbling sound! He thought it might be another volcanic eruption. He felt scared and he rushed to the escape speed boat with his hoverboard without any hesitation. But this time, the volcano did not erupt. Instead, he felt hungry! He smiled and he went to his favorite fast-food restaurant for his favorite and delicious double cheeseburger. Mike joined him after a while. Both were thankful that they could enjoy a peaceful day in their village again.

New Tales of China's Inventions

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Chen, Jiayi – 11

“Ring, ring, ring !” It’s a quarter to eight. “ Mum!” No response. “ Dad?” Still no response. I sat up and looked around, an unfamiliar place .” Where am I?” My eyes glanced at the calendar on the desk, it clearly showed 2100. A chill welled up my heart. Suddenly, a sound of footsteps got louder and louder. I wanted to run but it’s too late. Cold sweat ran down my cheeks. I closed my eyes tightly.

Abruptly, I felt a warm tap on my shoulder,” Are you awake?” I slowly opened my eyes up, looked at her, and asked who she was. “Oh, sorry! Let me explain now .” She used her finger to tap the wall three times. In an instant, a robot flew towards us and scanned us. “ I am Joycelyn Chen. My name is the same as yours cause I am you and you are me. I used a time machine to teleport you here. See, our DNA are the same” she said while pointing at the screen the hovering robot showed. I stared at her with a puzzled look.” So, it means that you are the future Joycelyn? Can I call your F.J.?” Asked I curiously.

F.J. grabbed me suddenly and rushes out of her office, straight into an alley then she looked around and confirmed no one was around, she slightly pushed a wall. Then a camera appeared. She clicked it and a door on the wall opened. We went down the stairs into a spacious hall with a lot of computers. “ Do you know who Dr.Chan is ?” I looked at her quizzically .” He is a super famous scientist who invented many hi-tech things. However.....” She paused,” That day I went to an important science conference when he was also there. I wanted his advice on my new invention, an ear scanner, which can scan and receive any sound within 1000 kilometers. However, I accidentally overheard Dr. Chan’s words through my ear scanner. ” STEAL ALL great China’s inventions !” and that night TV news broadcasted two valuable ancient relics stolen. I know it must be him!” She let out a long sigh.

Then, I sneaked into his office and found out that he had a gigantic conspiracy, he wanted to go back to the past to steal and use the power of all the emeralds in the four inventions to make the whole universe become a brainless world !” F.J.exclaimed .

“So, I found you! Future Joycelyn and now Joycelyn cooperate to stop this !” “ You and me ?”
“Yes! I have packed up, the time machine, and the secret map we need.” What will we do ?” “ We take the time machine, follow the map, and find the four emeralds in China’s inventions. Then, we can stop bad scientist Dr.Chan !” Her eyes shone like stars.“ When will we go ?” “ Tonight !” We dashed into the time machine

” “Here we are! We are in the Han Dynasty !” F.J. said proudly.

“ We must find Cai Lun for the oldest paper in the world where the first emerald was hidden before Dr.Chan arrives .” Said F.J.

“ Better to find Cai Lun who invented paper making .’ I suggested strongly.

We quickly found Cai Lun’s mansion on our secret map and landed on the rooftop. Cai Lun was there sitting under a tree thinking how to invent papers. He took out a well-cut bamboo and soaked them in water. We stared with bated breath. After soaking, the bamboo was boiled to make a mushy pulp. At last, he asked his worker to press out water and dry out. Suddenly there was a green glowing in the water .” Emerald!” I whispered. When I was going to jump down, Dr. Chan and his servants were almost there. F.J. stopped me and took out a new gadget “See My Invisible Handy!” She controlled the robot’s hand to catch the emerald quickly. Soon the piece of emerald was in hand. Suddenly, countless sharp swords shot at us. F.J. quickly opened the time machine door and dragged into the time machine.” Run! To! Tang Dynasty !”

F.J. raised the torch high and we walked carefully in the dark, Finally, we arrived at the Tang Dynasty. Using my watch navigator and following that magic map, we found the inventor of the compass. Luan Da, he just made the first compass .” Yes! I make it !” He cried. We put on our invisible suits quickly and followed him. Suddenly we found the second piece of the emerald under the compass. F.J. immediately ran towards the glowing emerald. At that moment a net caught her.

Dr.Chan got her. I quickly jumped towards and grasped the emerald. Then, I cut the net with a pocket knife and rescued F.J.. We rushed into the time machine door.....

Gunpowder! The third stop is still the Tang Dynasty to look for the inventor of gunpowder –Sun Simiao. After flying through the time machine, we climbed up the rooftop of Sun’s house. Unfortunately, Dr.Chan and his servants arrived at Sun’s house earlier. At that moment, a cannonball was launched out “Boom!” with a loud bang. There was a small green stone dropped on the ground. It is the third piece of emerald. Dr.Chan ran to grasp the green stone and disappeared in the dark. We sat on the ground frustratedly. A warm voice came out “ You must be Joycelyn Chen! Here is my secret recipe, It may be helpful to protect you.” It’s Sun Simiao who passed us his new invention. He chose to trust and support us.

The fourth task was to go to the Song Dynasty and find the last piece of emerald.

F.J.’s time machine quickly sent us to the early Song Dynasty. It’s not difficult to find the inventor Bi Sheng who invented printing techniques. His son was playing with clay happily. Bi Sheng utilized the clay to invent the great technique finally. Suddenly a green emerald was glowing in the clay, I jumped down with excitement and quickly grasped the last piece from the clay.

“Haha! Although I have just only one piece emerald, my newest gadget can expand its power to increase 5 times more !” Dr.Chan said , appearing in front of us.

We started running. F.J. took out the three pieces of emerald and shaped them together into a Chinese word “ 中“.

The word glowed in F.J.’s hand with a tremendous magic power. Dr.Chan could not resist our attack so he was turned into ashes finally.

A strong light shot at me so I fainted. When I woke up, I was in my bed, holding the three pieces of the emerald...

The Mysterious Adventure of “Paper”

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Choi, Yik Him – 11

It was a hot and muggy day. Sitting on my own seat I was listening to the staid Chinese History teacher, Mr Choo, teaching the textbook. The main reason I hate Chinese History is not the topics, but the time arrangement. Why should every History lesson be arranged after lunch? Don't the teachers know that it would make us drowsy and in the long run affect pupils' health?

“I believe you guys all know the historical incidents happened in Han Dynasty,” Mr Choo said. “Now, here's a assignment. Please write about a people in Han Dynasty. To make it fun, you can choose any aspects you like! Yippee!” I appreciated Mr Choo's efforts for making a relaxing vibe; however, I was a bundle of nerves as I had no idea about the topic!

“Ding Dong ---” the bell rang. Phew! The school finally ends! I quickly packed my schoolbag and left immediately. As usual when I was passing the thicket on the way home, the weather changed without a notice. Out of nowhere, there were strange sounds, clouds and dense fog. I slowly fell asleep in the sea of clouds. For sleeping so long that I didn't know the time and the place, I found myself sitting in the middle of the forest. Meanwhile, a young man was walking toward me while I was cleaning up my thought.

“Excuse me. I'm lost. Where is it?” I asked politely. The man replied with smile, “Here's Baishui County.” As I scrutinized the man, it was weird that he dressed in a strange way. He wore a big hat and a thick gown with several layers, using a ribbon weaving to fix his body, as well as a pair of long boots as if he was wearing a Halloween costume.

“My name is Paper Zhang. What's your name?” I asked warily, gazing the young man. “My name is Cai Lun. Nice to meet you,” the man answered. I responded, “Nice to meet you, Cai L.....” Wait ... Cai Lun? Where did I hear this name before? Abruptly, Mr Choo's stern face flashed through my mind! Cai Lun, the ancient Chinese inventor of paper! I travelled through time to Han Dynasty! Wasn't that tooooooooooo adventurous?

After calming myself down, I went with Cai upon his invitation. Cai introduced himself as a government officer and he had just attended a friend's birthday party living along Wai River. It was a sunny day and we enjoyed the stunning scenery and chatted a lot along the journey feeling like the old friends. When we went to a pond near riverside, we saw a gang of children. They seemed to play something cheerfully we didn't know. They concentrated and very busy on their play so they didn't realized there were two people standing in front of them. Some were pulling out a thick pulp from the water; some were putting the pulp sheets under the sun; some were writing something on the dried pulp sheets. Cai stared at the children and couldn't take his eyes off them as if he was thinking about something seriously. As time passed by, Cai finally stepped forward toward the children and asked, “Hi, what are you playing?” One boy who seemed to be the leader among the children replied, “These are ‘cotton skin’! They're fun! Do you want some?” Just then, the boy gave Cai a piece of “cotton skin” and waved goodbye. Cai took a closer look at it, touched it, smelled it, and even tasted it. After a while, he dashed to the edge of pond and examined the pulp meticulously. Suddenly, Cai widely opened his eye, grinned from ear to ear and shrieked with happiness, “I've found it! I've found it!” Then, he galloped to the village to ask one old villager for details. According to the old man, this was a stagnant pond. For a long time people had disposed the cotton waste to the pond after popping cotton. Little by little, they throw another rubbish like abandoned shoes, string, leather in it and eventually the water turned into rusty pulp.

Later, we returned to the inn after sunset. Cai and I sat around the table and Cai breathed a sigh of relief as if a big problem was solved. He said, “Zhang, today is the happiest day in my life. Since I was young, I dreamt to invent something convenient for writing and make people to have a better life. As bamboo is heavy, it's inconvenient. I've tried hard and failed numerous times, until today, when I found the pulp it inspired me and I know I will succeed in the near future. Will you accompany me to make it come true?”

I was touched. I nodded and said yes to Cai.

Time flies. One month later, after refinements and improvements, here came the final version of pulp sheet. Soon, Cai built a large factory to produce the sheet in mass. One day, Cai said to me, “Zhang, without your help and support, I can’t succeed. Therefore, may I ask your permission to name the sheet by using your name, ‘Paper?’”

“Yes, absolutely!” I exclaimed.

“And,” Cai took out a piece of ‘paper’ from his pocket and said sincerely, “this is for you, my dearest friend.”

Once I received the gift, I saw Cai’s handwriting and signature on it:

“FRIENDSHIP FOREVER!

IT’S A BLESSING TO HAVE A BEST FRIEND LIKE YOU.

CAILUN (signature)”

At that moment, I couldn’t help but the tears were running out of control. All of a sudden, a voice yelling at the top of her lungs, “PAPER Zhang! Wake up or you’ll be late for school!”

It’s Mum. I rolled my eyes and realized that all adventures were a dream although the scene was pretty true. However, by next second, I puzzled whether it was just only a dream since I shockingly saw that piece of paper Cai sent me “yesterday” was incredibly on my desk, next to my Chinese History assignment.....

New Tales of China's Inventions

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Choi, Wing Hei – 10

In the heart of China, where ancient traditions intertwine with modern innovation, new tales are being woven every day. From the bustling streets of Shanghai to the serene landscapes of Guilin, China's narrative continues to evolve.

Amidst the skyscrapers that pierce the clouds, a new generation of entrepreneurs is shaping the future of technology and commerce. Start-up hubs in Beijing and Shenzhen buzz with creativity, birthing innovations that ripple across the globe. Meanwhile, the echoes of ancient wisdom still resonate in the tranquil courtyards of the Forbidden City, reminding visitors of China's enduring cultural legacy.

In the realm of art and literature, contemporary Chinese creators are crafting stories that reflect the complexities of a rapidly changing society. Through brushstrokes and words, they capture the essence of modern China, exploring themes of identity, urbanization, and social change. Traditional art forms such as Peking opera and calligraphy continue to thrive, bridging the past and the present.

Venturing beyond the urban landscape, China's natural wonders continue to enchant and inspire. The misty peaks of Huangshan, the otherworldly karst formations of Zhangjiajie, and the majestic Yangtze River all beckon adventurers and nature enthusiasts to partake in their timeless beauty.

As China asserts itself on the global stage, its role in shaping the future of our planet becomes increasingly significant. From pioneering sustainable energy initiatives to leading the way in technological advancements, China's influence reverberates across continents.

Amidst the whirlwind of change, the ancient pulse of China endures, weaving together the old and the new into a rich tapestry of stories that captivate the world.

New Tales of China's Inventions

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Chu, Long Yan Coleman – 10

In ancient China, there were many important inventions like gunpowder, papermaking, the compass and printing. All these inventions marked a milestone of the development of China in the area of education, military, culture and history. Furthermore, some ancient medical treatments and medicine were also very important to cure disease and save millions of lives till now. However, there are lots of disease with no cure like Aids, cancers and blindness.

Can you image what happen if one day you cannot see anything? It will take you away from a sighted colorful world to complete darkness, moving through simulated daily environment with a cane, “reading” the raised dots with your fingers, exploring the unseen, escorted by your family members. You can only challenge your other senses of here, touch, smell and even taste to ‘see’ the world.

First of all, let me tell you how we “see”. Light bounces off everything we see. When our eyes take in light through the lens, there are special light sensitive cells on the retina to convert the light into messages, which we called them nerve impulses. Nerve impulses travel to our brain via the optic nerve and our brain will interpret the nerve impulses and tells us what we are seeing. Unfortunately, the malfunction of the lens, sensitive cells, optic nerve or even the brain cells causes blindness.

Today we are here to announce a breakthrough technology; it will change the world forever. The revolutionized invention is the “Eyeball 2024”. This milestone invention was the fruit of a group of Chinese medical scientists, ophthalmologists, anesthesiologists, biomedical engineers with the generous sponsorship from the companies Huawei. They have worked together for 4 years to invent this piece of “ART”. It can be transplanted in the human skull and replace the malfunction eyeball and can totally simulate the human eyeball function.

The “Eyeball 2024” is an invention based on the simple principle of vision. In the Eyeball 2024, there is a piece of “lens”. The teams spent almost two years to produce this revolutionized “lens” which was actually inspired by the smart phone technology of Huawei. This “lens” can detect and capture the image of the user looking at. If people suffering from visual impairment implanted the Eyeball 2024, the eyeball can receive light from the environment through the “lens”, it then generates “special signal” and send the signal through the “neuron-cable” which is connected to his brain cell in the visual region. It is these sophisticated “lens”, “neuron-cable” and “special signal” works together make connection and stimulation of the human brain cell possible. The Eyeball 2024 not only brings people vision, but also improve the well-being of the visually impaired and their families.

Nowadays, there are about 8.69 million people who suffered from visual impairment in China. With the invention of the Eyeball 2024, all these people can see the world and have a new life again. At the same time, every year the government can reallocate tremendous resources to help more and more people in needed instead of providing the visually impaired with different services like eye care, rehabilitation, vocational training, educational support, employment guidance, and residential care etc.

It is believed that with the maturation of advance technology, the cost of the Eyeball 2024 will be much lower and affordable by many users. Though I agree “The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched – they must be felt with the heart,” by Helen Keller, no one will object that it will be much better if we can see the world with our hearts and our eyes at the same time.

New Tales of China's Inventions

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Lai, Pui Sang – 10

One day, a boy was born full of curiosity and honesty. When he grew up, he became the inventor of paper, which spread his fame across China.

That boy was me.

My name is Cai Lun, and this is my life.

I was born in Guiyang. As I was born without any problems with my health, my relatives were over the moon, so they had a party that night.

When I grew up, I went to school. My exam results were excellent! My teachers and classmates also liked me because of my good conduct results. When I went home, I always revised the topics I learnt. One day, the emperor came to our school, and he had a chat with me. After hearing about my talents, he was surprised and admired me very much.

In 75 CE, I got a job in the royal palace – a chamberlain, to help manage the royal household. I assisted Empress Dou in securing her son to be the crown prince, by interrogating Consort Song and her sister, who later killed themselves. In 88 CE, she rewarded me with two positions: Zhongchang shi, a political official to the emperor; and Shangfang Ling, to oversee the production of making instruments and weapons, for accomplishing my tasks. I was so proud of myself!

Even though Emperor He unseated the Dou family in 92 CE, I was undisturbed and continued doing my jobs. I became responsible for ceremonial weapons. I tried many ways to smelt metal, tried many times to make the sword sharper Finally, I found a way to make the sword extremely sharp, by mixing iron with different materials, making it stronger, so that it would be easier to sharpen, making it the perfect sword for battle. I cheered, “I finally succeeded!”

As I wanted to write down the new method of making swords, I ordered one of my servants to fetch me some bamboo slips. Later, I heard a bang! I quickly rushed to my servant and asked, “Are you alright?” My servant muttered, “These bamboo slips are too heavy!”

As quick as lightning, an idea popped into my head. “Aha!” I cried, “Now, I shall make something to replace the current materials, to make reading and writing more convenient. Yes, it must be light and cheap!” From that instant, I rejected all invitations and started thinking about ways to improve the current materials used for writing. However, no matter how hard I thought, I still could not think of the perfect materials for making paper.

The next day, as I was strolling in my backyard, I accidentally tripped over a pile of fish nets. “Ouch. it hurts! Wait, this is sturdy. Yes! I will use tree bark, fish nets, rags, and hemp to make paper!”

From that instant, I went into the forest frequently to collect materials such as tree bark and hemp. Then, at home, I experimented countless for new methods for making paper.

Finally, I found the perfect combination: First, I needed to soak tree bark and fish nets in water. When they were soft enough, I shredded them with a knife. Then, I would steam the ingredients, to purify the plant residues. After that, I needed to thicken the mixture by smashing it with a wooden stick. Lastly, I needed to sift a thin sheet from the mixture and leave it out to dry in the sun. When I was forty-three, I finally succeeded!

I happily told the emperor about the recipe for making paper and showed him the final product. He was overjoyed! My paper quickly spread across the empire, which gave me fame. Five years later, my ally Deng Sui told me to check on the Five Classics renewed by one hundred scholars!

The emperor rewarded me for my excellent service; he gave me the title, “Marquis of Dragon Pavilion”! Not to forget the best: I became Lord of Longting! I was extremely proud of myself.

Sadly, when Deng passed away, the Ministry of Justice ordered me to the court as I was one of the culprits in the death of the emperor's grandmother, Consort Song.

As I am old, I might as well stop writing about my lifetime. But before I stop, I want to tell everyone something: Do not think that I was born with these talents. My success all relies on hard work, perseverance and concentration.

The Invention of Paper: Beyond Oliver's Dream

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Lam, Ho Hin – 11

A long time ago, in the Han dynasty, there lived a wise man named Cai Lun. Cai was a skilled court official, and often known for his intelligence and innovative thinking. He invented an essential invention no one today can live without—paper.

Oliver was a curious little kid who hated school and homework. One day, he was frustrated by all the schoolwork and homework. He muttered, “I wonder who invented paper? I hate that guy!”

That very night, he dreamt of something special... He travelled back in time, to meet this “inventor of paper”.

Oliver fell down from the sky, and landed with a loud “bang!” on the ground. He was rather confused where he was. Then he wandered around aimlessly until he heard his stomach rumble when seeing some hawkers selling authentic Chinese cuisine. He was attracted to it like a bee to a flower, but then he realised he didn't have any money. He found an advertisement for a job to be an assistant for writers. He was very hungry so he wanted money to buy food, so he applied for the job.

After he arrived at his master's workshop, he found his master working hard and writing on a hard turtle shell. Oliver said, “Why are you so cruel killing turtles to get their shells as a parchment? It's not like you're poor. Use paper!” His master, Cai Lun, looked at him like he was an alien and told him, “There is no such thing as paper! I can't afford silk so I have to write on these hard turtle shells. Are you crazy?” The other workers laughed at Oliver and said, “Kid, of course there is a sort of parchment which is cheap and easy to write on!” with a sort of sarcasm in their voices.

Oliver's cheek was as red as a tomato and couldn't come up with a snappy comeback, but he wanted to prove them wrong. He realised that in the old days, paper wasn't even invented and he felt sorry for them, so he decided to help history. One day, he told Cai about his idea. Cai rolled his eyes and said, “Surprise surprise, it's you again. You kids nowadays are too crazy and mental. How am I supposed to make a flexible and smooth parchment using wood? Give me a break!”

Oliver was a bit taken aback from the rudeness in Cai's tone, but he didn't give up. Every day after a hard time with work, he sneaked like a mouse to Cai's library to read about the structure of trees, the history of parchments, etc. He also sometimes stared longingly out of the windows, trying to remember the structure of paper and any idea of how to create it. He regretted he didn't read more science books in the past.

Oh wait! Oliver suddenly remembered something he had read before during Science week at school. He recalled that he needed a soup that looked like toothpaste to create “paper”. But the materials needed to create such thing was only accessible by the royal family, so Oliver had to do what he needed to do.

Oliver put on a hood the next night, and sneaked away to the royal temple. He knew that if he was caught, the punishments would make school bullies look like a scrape on the knee, but he needed to do this for the sake of humanity. He swam in the deep moat to go to the temple. He was drenched and his jaw was chattering so hard that almost awoke the entire temple. He sneaked into the temple to steal the materials, but then something embarrassing happened. “Prrt” Oliver accidentally cut the cheese and alerted the guards! The guards immediately ran after him, cursing while doing so. Oliver had to think fast, so he screamed, “Ahh! A dragon!” The guards looked back for a second and Oliver ran for his life. The guards' swords even barely missed him by inches, and he hurled himself on a cart full of hay, and safely made it back to Cai's workshop.

Even though it was a bit awkward, Oliver put his pride aside and went to talk to Cai personally. Too proud to believe in a kid, Cai wanted to prove Oliver wrong, but Cai after all, was clever. He started to think about Oliver's idea seriously and realized that Oliver was actually right all along. He was also touched by what Oliver had to go through just to help him invent something. He vigorously flipped through hundreds of books, and finally came up with an idea to finally make use of tree logs and stuff to create paper. He also created tons of simple machines to slice off the barks to make them smaller and more effective.

After Cai told the emperor his and Oliver's idea, the emperor immediately fell in love with the idea and ordered his men to create millions of pieces of these so called "paper". It was cheap but also flexible, so it was suitable for ordinary people who couldn't afford the expensive silk. He realized that Oliver stole his possessions for good so he didn't punish him. Instead, he awarded Cai and Oliver many of his prized possessions, including gold and silver.

Just as Oliver was enjoying the time of his life having a feast with Cai and the emperor, his alarm clock rang and he woke up with a start. He finally knew that it was a dream and he learnt a very valuable lesson, don't take things you already have for granted. He experienced first person that life in old China wasn't easy and he had to treasure things he had now.

The whole world owes a huge gratitude to Cai as he really changed the world by his invention. For example, this invention had improved the environmental problems as using animal bones as parchments is very cruel. The legacy of him will be forever remembered through the world.

China's New Invention: AI Guide Dog

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Lee, Yee Wa Grace – 10

China has been the birthplace of numerous groundbreaking inventions. From ancient times to the present day, Chinese inventors have contributed to advancements in multitudinous fields. The following is one of the tremendous inventions from China.

Lu Ban was a renowned Chinese architect, master carpenter, structural engineer and inventor during the Zhou Dynasty. He was credited with a number of important inventions, including the cloud ladder, the saw, the grappling hook, and the first umbrella. Inspired by children using lotus leaves as rain shelters, he created an umbrella by making a flexible framework covered by a cloth. He played a significant role in the history of umbrellas. His innovative design paved the way for the evolution of umbrellas into the versatile and practical accessories that we rely on in various weather conditions. Everyone in the world needs an umbrella.

China's past inventions not only demonstrate the ingenuity and creativity of its people but also highlight the country's significant contributions to human civilization. China's legacy of invention serves as a reminder of the power of human innovation.

In one study, 80% of participants ranked vision as their most valued or dominant sense. We perceive up to 80% of our impressions by means of what we see. And eyes that protect us from dangers, but the taste and smell do not. We take vision for granted, but without vision, we struggle to learn, to walk, to read, to recognize people, to participate in school, and to work.

The population of visually handicapped people was on the rise. Teng Wei Min, former vice chairman of the China Association of the Blind, said that there are 17 million blind people in China, whereas about 9 million blind people are employed. It was not a number, but it was a crucial message to tell us there are lots of vision-impaired people we can help in China.

Guide dogs are assistance dogs trained to lead blind or visually impaired people around obstacles. However, according to the Zhengzhou Love Guide Dog Service Center, a guide dog training school, there are less than 300 guide dogs in China, leaving less than 0.001% of people with access to a guide dog in another country, such as America, where about 1% of blind people have guide dogs – it means 1000 times the ratio of China. A guide dog is more than just assistance for their user; it is also their companion, family member, and beyond. The lack of guide dogs has isolated them from the outside world. They deserve to have the choice to embrace the colorful world.

The scarcity of guide dogs is caused by various factors. In spite of this, not all dogs are suitable to be trained as guide dogs. Only rare breeds of dogs, such as the Golden Retriever, German Shepherd and Labrador, coupled with good qualities of smartness, persistence, obedience and friendliness, will be selected to be trained and become professional guide dogs. Moreover, it usually takes 1.5 to 2 years to train a qualified guide dog, with a high training cost. But the service period is low; it was between 6 and 10 years.

Chinese company Unitree Robotics recently demonstrated its consumer tech product called the Go2, an intelligent pet dog that mimics the movements of a real dog and incorporates stability control, motion coordination, obstacle avoidance and adaptive learning through AI.

I hope the Chinese inventor will invent an AI guide dog in the coming future. This robotic dog is equipped with the most advanced computer vision, sensors and cameras. By detecting objects, obstacles and hazards, it interprets the surrounding environment, analyzes complex situations and provides real-time guidance to its user. Technology seamlessly integrates with their daily needs and lives. Consequently, enhancing their quality of life.

Through combining cutting-edge technology with the innate loyalty nature of dogs. This new invention will not only assist individuals with visual impairments to navigate their surroundings safely with ease, go to school or work, and travel the world without limitation, but also get them a trustworthy companion. Furthermore, the fulfillment of happiness and joy for them and their family is priceless.

Last but not least, the demand for guide dogs is large around the world. In compare to traditional guide dogs, the AI guide dog has its own advantages. For example, it does not require feeding, grooming or veterinary care and has a long life span. It does not experience fatigue or emotional fluctuations. Apart from this, they are furless, which, in the other words, means that they won't cause any allergic reaction to their user and their family if they have allergic rhinitis or skin allergies.

In conclusion, I support the invention and development of AI in the way that assists in improving human medical needs which benefit their health.

Dreaming Back to Chang'an: A Gift from the Ancients

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Liu, Yee – 10

Xiaoming was a primary school student filled with curiosity toward science. One day, while learning about the Four Great Inventions of ancient China, he was deeply attracted by the stories of great inventions told by his teacher. Xiaoming's grandfather was an archaeologist and had once given him an ancient gift — a seemingly ordinary jade pendant. His grandfather told him that this pendant hid the wisdom of ancient China. Xiaoming wished the the pendant could bring him some exploration about the ancient China.

From then on, Xiaoming decided to try and unravel the mystery of the jade pendant with his good friend Xiaohua. One day, after finishing his homework, Xiaoming felt a bit hungry, so he used the microwave to heat up some food. Suddenly, his gaze fell on the jade pendant, and he impulsively heated it in the microwave for a minute. Amazingly, a hand-drawn map and some strange symbols appeared on the pendant. Following the map, they activated a magical symbol hidden behind a bookshelf in grandfather's study room, which unexpectedly transported Xiaoming and Xiaohua to Chang'an during the Tang Dynasty. They were astonished to find out that people there were using a very odd device called "Fantasy Unleashed" ,which could instantly create anything from food to clothing.

In the market of Chang'an, Xiaoming discovered a kiosk selling "Seeds of the Future." These seeds looked quite ordinary, but once planted, they could quickly grow into various items that people needed, such as furniture and even houses. Xiaoming realized that these seeds were a gift from future technology, a treasure prepared by the ancients for later generations.

Xiaoming and Xiaohua learned much knowledge and wisdom in Chang'an. They understood that the people there did not simply rely on technology, but harmoniously integrated it with nature, creating a sustainable society.

After helping an ancient inventor solve a difficult problem, Xiaoming and Xiaohua were given the chance to return to the modern world. On their way back, they learned that their journey through time was a practice designed by ancients to ensure the transmission of wisdom across different eras.

When back to the present, Xiaoming and Xiaohua found that the jade pendant they held had transformed into a glowing seed. They presented this seed at their school's Science Festival, and upon planting it, it quickly grew into a tree with many technologies.

Xiaoming and Xiaohua realized that the technology of the future was not out of reach. The wisdom of the ancients and modern innovation could be combined to jointly create the future. They began sharing their experiences at school, encouraging other students to unleash their imagination and creativity.

The Technological Tree, grown rapidly from the seed, was not only beautiful but also purified the air, absorbed pollutants, and even generated a small amount of clean energy. This tree became a new symbol of the school, representing innovation and environmental protection.

The story of Xiaoming and Xiaohua inspired more and more classmates to participate in scientific exploration. From improving the campus environment to designing new learning tools, everyone contributed their wisdoms. Xiaoming and Xiaohua understood something important: whether in ancient times or the modern era, the true power behind inventions comes from humanity's dream and pursuit of a better future. They decided that they would become an inventor in the future, continually exploring and innovating, contributing their knowledge to the world.

As their story spread widely, a totally new era began. China once again became a centre of global technological innovation. Their inventions were not just for China but for the future of all humanity.

New Tales of China's Inventions

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Liu, Yu Hei – 10

Sunny was going to her grandfather's home when she found out about four China's major inventions. She would never forget that trip.

Sunny's grandfather was sick so she took a basket and put some medicine and water in it and set off. On the way, she met an old man begging to have some water. Sunny pitied him and gave him some water. Suddenly, the old man stood up and a gust of strong wind blew. The wind was too strong that Sunny couldn't open her eyes and when she opened her eyes, she saw Taishang Laojun.

"Dear girl," the old man said slowly. "You have proved that you are worthy. Please, I need you to help me collect inventions in China. If you agree, then meet me here tonight with the inventions when the moon is the brightest." A gust of wind blew and Taishang Laojun was gone. Sunny wanted to ask tons of questions, and say yes to Taishang Laojun. She walked for a while when she found out she was lost. "Where am I?" Sunny said.

"Wow! What a good smell!" Sunny exclaimed. She really wanted to know where that smell came from so, she followed the smell to see people using some kind of grass to make a liquid thing. The workers looked up and saw Sunny. They introduced themselves and what they were making----tea. Suddenly, a man wearing a golden cloth with dragons on it walked out. Sunny immediately knew he was the Chinese emperor Shennong. He looked at Sunny. And said, "Can you help me solve this problem? You look smart." Sunny leaned over to see what problem the people have. She knew it, the people immediately used the leaves from the trees to make tea. But Sunny knew that tea leaves should be dry. She told this to the people. Emperor Shennong smiled at Sunny. "Well done kid! May you have one of our tea." Sunny smiled and took it. "Thanks!" she said and waved goodbye to them.

Sunny loved the tea very much, but she couldn't wait for the next adventure coming. She saw something ahead so she ran towards it. She found some people making a clay pot. She thinks it is very dirty. The people were very concentrated in their work so Sunny walked over them quietly, but still, the workers found her sneaking. After a long debate, Sunny won saying that she is good and doesn't mean any harm. So, the workers taught Sunny how to make the clay pot into a China porcelain. Sunny then helped them draw some beautiful marks on the pots. It was so beautiful that the workers gave Sunny a porcelain. Sunny thanked them and set off again.

"This cloth is amazing! But I think we have one more thing missing. Everything just can't go right!" Who is saying that? Sunny crept closer and saw a gorgeous woman wearing a beautiful silk. "That must be Princess Xi Lingshi!" Sunny thought. Princess Xi Lingshi spotted Sunny and pointed at her, "You there, please help me! If you can, I will reward you!" Sunny did not want a reward but she wanted to help people, so she went to the princess. "What is the matter?" Sunny asked. "My silk dress is very gorgeous but my hairstyle isn't! I have to go to a meeting today and I won't if I can't have my hair done!" the princess wailed. Sunny thought for a while and said eventually, "Well then, here's my only hair clip with a butterfly on it. Please take it." The princess took it and put it on her hair. "It's perfect! Now, you have helped me a lot, please take a roll of silk back." Sunny thanked the princess and left. She looked at the things she received. She found out that all three of them are China's inventions, that means there is one more to find. But it is almost dark, she has to hurry!

"Kites? Where do people have kites?" Sunny was almost at the end of her journey when she saw a bunch of kites in the sky. "Come on everyone! Look! It's flying!" a person said loudly. Sunny squeezed herself into a group of people and watched. It's philosophers Mozi and Lu Ban! Sunny knew this was the last object she needed. But how can she have one? Then she heard, "If you want to make a kite, come here!" Awesome! She could make one! Sunny made a kite quickly and set off to find Taishang Laojun.

She ran back to where she met him. It was midnight already. Sunny finally stopped and she sat down on a rock. She looked up on the sky and there was it, there was where the moon was the brightest. Then she saw Taishang Laojun. Taishang Laojun saw the inventions Sunny was holding. He smiled. Sunny handed them over and Taishang Laojun said, "Good worthy child, you have done your thing. Now, I must grant you a wish. What do you wish for?" Sunny suddenly remembered her grandfather. She told Taishang Laojun about it and told him she doesn't have time. Taishang Laojun nodded and said to Sunny, "May the time go back to help this worthy child." And disappeared. Strong wind blew and it was day time again. Sunny looked at her watch: 10:56 a.m.? Time did go back! Sunny smiled and skipped all the way to her grandfather's home. "What an exciting day!" She sighed cheerfully to herself.

New Tales of China's Inventions

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Ng, Yan Kiu Audrey – 10

It was the Christmas Eve of 2003. To prepare for a school project, Ali and Barbara, a pair of inseparable twins worked so hard to learn about China's remarkable inventions. As they dived into the depths of research, a mysterious force awakened. In an instant, Ali and Barbara were given the power of time travel! They were transported across the ages and embarked on an exciting journey through history, where they would witness the very origin of China's groundbreaking inventions!

Ali and Barbara's first stop was ancient China. Illuminated by the gentle glow of an oil lamp, they found themselves in the company of Cai Lun, a courtier in the Han Dynasty. With skilled precision, Cai Lun skillfully twisted together fibers to give birth to a revolutionary creation: Paper! "Whoa, Ali, look at this! Can you believe that Cai Lun just created paper from those fibers?" Barbara exclaimed in admiration. "Yeah, it's incredible! Imagine how much easier it will be to write from now on," Ali replied with excitement. Ali and Barbara knew that this invention would forever change the path of human knowledge and communication.

Next, Ali and Barbara found themselves in a busy street of Chang'an, surrounded by a strong smell of ink. There, they encountered Bi Sheng, who was diligently carving complicated characters onto some wooden blocks. Ali asked, "How long does it take to carve all those characters?" Bi Sheng smiled and replied, "It requires patience. Yet once it's done, we can print countless copies in no time!" Filled with anticipation, Ali and Barbara witnessed printing coming to life. From this moment, the world opened its arms to millions of stories and wisdom, and forever indebted to this remarkable invention!

Ali and Barbara's journey then drove them into a later point of time, 2023. At a train platform, they eagerly boarded a streamlined and modern-looking train. The high-speed train hurtling through the countryside at an astonishing speed! "Oh Barbara, just imagine how much time we'll save when we travel on this train!" Ali remarked, "Such high-speed railway network invented by China not only fostered economic growth, but also united the nation with seamless efficiency!"

After getting off from the train, Ali and Barbara walked into a wet market in hope of buying some food. They witnessed a surprising phenomenon – people here were effortlessly doing transactions with a wave of their cell phones! The wonders of how Chinese people using mobile payment systems really enchanted the twin time travelers. Ali turned to Barbara and said "This technology is incredible! It's so convenient and efficient!" Barbara nodded in agreement and replied, "Let's say goodbye to the days of carrying cash!"

As Ali and Barbara's journey came near its end, they stood in amazement of China's remarkable inventions that changed the world history! From the ancient papermaking and printing to the revolutionary high-speed railway network and mobile payment systems, China's pioneering spirit had contributed so much to humanity through time. Inspired by the past and driven by the future, Ali and Barbara were confident that the legacy of China's inventions would continue to inspire generations to come.

Lunar Flying Capsule

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Tse, Sharon – 10

“Mollie, what makes you call me in this early morning?”

“Patient 193 Susan will need an emergency surgery in 10 minutes. Please arrive in 5 minutes. See you at room 132. Bye!”

This is year 2050. I was about to get up this morning, my smartphone rang. It was 5:00 a.m. It was a call from my doctor partner. I threw my phone into my bag and hurried into the bathroom and then to my dressing room. I polished off a few cookies and some lemonade, then stepped out.

“Tecna, go to ST hospital now!” I got in and commanded my “Lunar Flying Capsule”.

The “Lunar Flying Capsule” took off. Within a minute, I arrived at the rooftop of ST hospital. Fortunately, I was able to make it on time. I rushed into room 132 and put on my gloves and my mask.

“Give me the tweezers, scissors and suckers.” I demanded. I performed Susan’s surgery. The surgery was very successful and Susan is fine.

Back in 2030, when I was 16 years old, I watched the news on the television.

“Three Chinese astronauts went to space at 5:26 p.m. Their mission is to go to the Moon to explore and bring back some lunar soil and stones.”

“Wow! Those astronauts are just like Chang’e flying to the moon! No wonder the spacecraft is called Chang’e! How wonderful is that!” I was really excited and proud.

“Next, a death was reported from the WH hospital. Because of traffic jam, the victim couldn’t arrive at the hospital in time and passed away.” I was really upset that time and thought, “What a wretched news! If the paramedics have wings to send the victim to the hospital in time, he could be saved. It’s all because of that stupid traffic jam!” I was so mad that I stomped my feet hard on the floor at that moment.

A year later, the three Chinese astronauts returned back to the Earth and brought back 3127 g of lunar soil and stones with them. When a group of astronomers were surveying the lunar soil and rocks the astronauts brought back, something that was shiny and white in the lunar soil caught their eyes.

“Such an enormous and gorgeous pearl!” They found a white stone that looked like a pearl, but much bigger.

“Ahh!” An astronomer split some green tea on the stone accidentally. A miracle happened.

“Oh dear! See what’s going on here!”

“Oh, my goodness! Am I dreaming?”

“Unbelievable!”

The white stone floated in the air and hovered around the astronomers. The astronomers watched in disbelief. One of them quickly snatched the flying stone down. They perform detailed examinations.

“After three months of examination, the astronomers verified that this stone was a precious lunar flying stone. This special mineral will fly in the air if it contacts green tea,” the news broadcast.

In 2035, I checked out some information about the lunar flying stone: after extensive experiments and research, the Chinese scientists invented this flying machine called the “Lunar Flying Capsule” out of lithium and the lunar flying stone with a maximal speed of 500 km per hour. However, the prototype can only fly for about 5 minutes.

“That was fast. But it can only fly about 40 km.” I muttered.

Since then, when astronauts went to the Moon, they collected many flying stones and brought them back to the Earth. In 2040, after extensive research, a group of scientists from the National University of Defence Technology solved the final puzzle. With cutting edge nuclear technology, they successfully synthesized the lunar flying stone. As a result, we don't need to go to the Moon to collect the stones. Mass production of the flying stone makes the flying machine available for possible domestic use.

Due to limitation in the flying time, the "Lunar Flying Capsule" can only fly for a short distance. To solve this problem, the scientists were searching for the best fuel. They tried out all kinds of different green teas, including Jasmine, Sencha, Matcha, Genmaicha, ...etc. Finally, in 2045, the scientists found that the best fuel for the "Lunar Flying Capsule" was West Lake Longjing. With one litre from West Lake Longjing, the capsule could fly continuously for 24 hours. This discovery was the game changer. Since then, all Chinese citizens have access to this Hi-tech transportation.

"Sounds great! I am going to buy one since it only cost \$100,000."

Now, I am getting into my third generation "Lunar Flying Capsule" with a whooping maximal speed at 5000 km per hour! I am expected to arrive at Vienna in less than two hours to attend my sister, Sherry's concert at the Vienna Musikverein. My sister is a world-renowned violinist who will perform the Butterfly Lovers violin concerto with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

"Tecna, go to Vienna Musikverein as fast as possible. Play Debussy Arabesque." I commanded. Arabesque is my favourite piece and I am always relaxed when I am listening to this beautiful piano piece.

With the help of the "Satellite Harmony Navigation" system, the "Lunar Flying Capsule" takes off automatically. Then, the HW sound box starts playing Arabesque by Lang Lang while I am taking a nap. I am not worried about any traffic accident, as the navigation system has a perfect record of zero accident since it was launched two years ago.

"Good afternoon, Miss Sharon. It is 2:30 in the afternoon now. The drive to Vienna Musikverein is about 1 hour and 45 minutes. We will arrive there at about 3:15 in the afternoon. The weather in Vienna is 15°C-18°C. It is drizzling in Vienna. Please take an umbrella from the cabinet here. There are some drinks and snacks in the fridge. You can heat them up in the microwave. The "Lunar Flying Capsule" will take off in a minute. Thank you." Tecna uttered. Then it flew off to Vienna Musikverein...

New Tales of China's Inventions

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Wong, Tsz Kwan – 10

‘What topic should I do?’ Jonathan pondered, his brows furrowed with concern. He had an assignment deadline tomorrow, and he had not settled on a topic. The assignment was about China’s inventions. His teacher mentioned explicitly they could not write about the four great inventions. He had been racking his brains but hardly came up with any other well-known inventions beyond the Compass, Papermaking, Gunpowder and Printing.

While lost in deep thought, Jonathan was startled by his sister, Jenny who ran home in a hurry. She was soaking wet! He had not noticed the heavy rain until this moment. It was then his eyes fell upon the umbrellas next to the front door while Jenny was drying herself. ‘What’s on your mind?’ Jenny asked curiously. Jonathan thought once again. He recalled umbrellas were originally invented in China. But who invented them, and how did they get the idea? The more he thought about it, the more curious he got. He decided to visit his best friend, Joseph who had the extraordinary power to travel through time, and maybe he could help to explore.

When Jonathan arrived at Joseph’s house, he saw Joseph gazing out of the window. He clearly did not know how to do the assignment too. Jonathan told Joseph about the umbrellas idea. After a bit of discussion, Joseph agreed to go to the past to learn more about the inventor. Without hesitation, Joseph grabbed Jonathan’s hand walking towards his magic mirror. They were whisked away in a second after a flash, travelling almost three thousand and five hundred years back in time.

Joseph and Jonathan landed on a tree, but then both of them lost their grip and tumbled down to the ground in front of a passerby. He was in shock by their sudden appearance. Without questioning and seeing them in great pain, the man brought them home. As they made their way, their peculiar clothing caught the attention of other village people who whispered amongst themselves these two boys might be wanderers from distant places.

It was not long they arrived the man’s house. It was huge and nicely built from wood! He led Joseph and Jonathan to a room and provided them with clean clothes. Shortly after, the man’s wife returned home and greeted the boys kindly. She made them all a delicious vegetable stew. As they sat down to eat, the man introduced himself, ‘my name is Lu Ban and my wife is Yun. We live here for a long time and I am a carpenter. Please make yourselves at home.’ Jonathan was astonished by the name and could not help wondering, ‘Wait! Was he the famous inventor from ancient China?’. He got confirmed through chatting with the couple after dinner.

The boys decided to stay longer at Lu Ban’s house, trying to understand more on this great inventor. Lu Ban went out for work every day. Yun had to prepare meals for him therefore. She had to walk a long way no matter it was sunny or rainy days. Lu Ban built some pavilions on the way for her to rest however it was still hard for Yun. One day, she went back in fatigue. ‘I wish I had a movable pavilion,’ Yun told Jonathan and Joseph. ‘My husband is a hard-working man so he always has to work all day outside, it will be fabulous if there is a portable thing for this purpose. Maybe I can invent something...’ Yun kept on saying. Jonathan gasped and whispered to Joseph, ‘She might be the inventor of umbrellas!’ Joseph nodded. ‘Yun, maybe you could invent something for your husband! Something that is easy to bring and collapsible which allows Lu Ban walk in the rain without getting wet!’ Jonathan suggested. Yun stared at them and exclaimed, ‘That’s a brilliant idea! I’ll work on it right now!’ Joseph and Jonathan felt excited about helping her invent something for the entire world. Yun started to design and trimmed thin the bamboo for the umbrella framework, then mounted onto it animal skin.

Suddenly a red light blinking from Joseph’s pocket. It was the alert signal of his travel clock. It was time to leave or else they could not return back! After thanking the wife for everything, the boys went to a safe place where no one was watching, and Joseph took Jonathan’s hand and they time travelled back to the present. In a flash, they were back to the Joseph’s room. Time had not passed because of Joseph’s time travel ability, which also allowed him to stop it while they’re travelling in time. They both smiled at each other and realized Lu Ban’s wife was the one invented the umbrella. It was an amazing journey and both Jonathan and Joseph was excited to meet Yun and contributed idea to her umbrella invention. It was sunset, they both went home happily to finish their assignment.

“People in China are often smart and hardworking, as long as they could get a hint, they’ll be able to make useful inventions that everyone uses for their daily life ...” Jonathan wrote on his assignment.

New Tales of China's Inventions

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Yeung, Joy Nam – 11

Once upon a time, in a faraway land, a little boy named James loved hearing stories about incredible inventions from China. He always dreamed of inventing something special himself. One day, James found an old scroll in his grandpa's attic. It had pictures and words about forgotten inventions from China. James' eyes flash with excitement as he read about these amazing things and the clever people who made them. The Four Great Inventions of old China fascinated James the most. They were papermaking, printing, gunpowder, and the compass. He imagined how these inventions changed people's lives long ago. James was determined to bring back these forgotten inventions. He read old books, talked to smart people, and even visited faraway villages in search of clues.

After lots of trying, James learned how to make paper, just like in the olden days. He felt so proud when he held his first piece of handmade paper. Inspired by his success, James decided to teach others how to make it too. James taught the villagers how to make paper from scratch. They were so happy to learn this new skill. With the paper, they could draw pretty pictures, write letters, and keep their stories alive. James' paper became famous all over the world, and people came from near and far to see it.

Buoyed by his effort, James moved on to the next invention: printing. He brought talented artists together and they made prints using carved wooden blocks. The prints looked like magic! News quickly spread about James' amazing prints. People came from all over to see them. James prints decorated homes, temples, and even the emperor's palace.

Now, James turned his attention to another invention: gunpowder. But he wanted to use it for fun, not harm. James used gunpowder to create fantastic fireworks. The fireworks painted the sky with brilliant colours and example James' fireworks were so incredible that people gathered all around to celebrate. His displays brought joy and excitement to everyone. People laughed, danced, and made wishes as they watched the fireworks light up the night sky.

With newfound confidence, James explored the invention of the compass from the old scroll. He built a strong ship and with a brave crew, he set sail to discover new lands, guided by the compass. James and his crew sailed for many days. With the compass leading the way, they found new places and met new people. Their adventurous journeys allowed for trading and sharing of cultures on a big scale. James's story of his inventions became legendary. It taught people about the power of imagination, sharing knowledge, and making dreams come true.

And so, James' adventures joined the New Tales of China's Inventions. They reminded everyone that they too can invent amazing things and make the world a better place, just like James did long ago.

China's New Inventions

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Yu, Man To – 10

Everything in our lives are all inventions from different, ingenious inventors all around the world.

However, have you thought of what would be invented next? Today, I am going to share my thoughts.

Firstly, we need to know if what we think that hasn't been invented yet are actually already in real life. Like a robot-functioned restaurant, though this is already true. Japan has a lot of these restaurants. Or in some cases, it might not be in the real world, but with the technology, it can be invented by anybody. Like robot-functioned grocery stores or bars. Inventions coming in the next few years must be insane, so insane that no one will even think about until it is already shown to the public.

I think that my following thought might be invented in the future :

It is not some ordinary invention. It isn't even an item! It is a type of extreme protective layer material. Yes, you might have heard of this in sci-fi stories. Force Fields. That's right! You might ask why would anybody invent that. And that's because of war. War? Yes, although now the world seems peaceful, wars still exist. Countries might fight against another one due to confrontation or conflicts. And by now, more deadly weapons were invented. Such as bombs, more deadly tanks, bullets and guns. These can explode and cause deadly damage to a specific area. Now the people in that area will face different dangers, such as an air-strike or an ambush. Moreover, homes and nearby facilities will be destroyed. Some crucial supplies such as water or food supply will be suspended. Giving an extreme time for those people to survive.

However, with the force field—most commonly know for a heavy layer of protection that almost can't be destroyed, would save millions of people that are facing dangers caused by war.

I will now explain why this invention getting invented has a high possibility.

Due to it's fact that it is extremely protective and can be turned on and off at any time and doesn't use any energy, it is considerable to be invented. With this energy force-field, war will go extinct! It will save lives! And it also can be shaped in anyway, any shape, and any size! Even if there is still wars happening, there is completely no point as nothing would happen if a country's army just stayed in an area getting protected by the force-field. Although the space might seem confined, just turn it off and everyone can go explore this wonderful galaxy and world. Though military soldiers or training centers are no longer needed, this also gives more room for more facilities for the citizens. Such as different factorys.

Hopefully this invention will be invented to have a peaceful world where there is completely no violence like wars. This way, anybody are ensured to be safe from enemy countries.

Cai Lun's bold but effective Decision

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Yung, Wui Yan – 11

It was Emperor Ming's anniversary coronation. The whole country was in festival vibe. Decorations were over every corner of palace. Tones of tributes and gifts from other countries formed a long queue from entering the palace. Emperor Ming was ecstatic and the officials were busy to record the tributes and its country. Every government official must bring a present to celebrate. However, a Chinese official Cai Lun was panicking as he did not prepare a gift for him due to heavy workload. When the coronation began, he sat in an unnoticeable place, hoping not to be spotted by the emperor.

Emperor Ming invited messengers from neighboring countries to attend his party. They gave precious jewels and gold accessories with detailed craftsmanship. Except one Egyptian messenger handed a dilapidated wooden box. The emperor ordered, "Open it!" The Egyptian messenger opened it dilatorily. Against all expectations, there were neither jewels nor gold bricks. But rolls of cloth-like fiber.

One of the government officials grumbled, "Hoe dare the Egyptians! Such rude and impolite people they are!" When the Emperor heard this, he summoned knights to seize the messenger.

Cai Lun seemed to be tranquil and pleaded for him, "Your majesty, let him explain about this present!" The emperor nodded.

The Egypt messenger sneered at them, "Our pharaoh told me to send this gift because your country is uncivilized and foolish! You don't even have papyrus!"

Cai Lun and the other officials were irritated. He could not bear the anger so he stood up and shouted, "You think you Egyptians are smartest? China can't be affronted by Egypt! I promise! I will invent a stuff which is much better than papyrus!"

The emperor clapped his hands and everyone applauded. He announced, "Cai Lun, you will have three months to make your invention. Otherwise, there will be punishments!"

The Egyptian messenger interrupted, 'If your invention is successful, don't forget to send some to our pharaoh. Our pharaoh might use your invention instead of our papyrus. We are "looking forward" to receiving your invention very soon.' He said it as he laughed.

After the coronation ended, Cai Lun asked the haughty messenger, "What is the papyrus made up of?"

He replied, "I am going to tell you as It's not a secret – Nile grass. However, this plant can only be found in Egypt."

Cai Lun sighed, "Thanks." He then left quietly.

Cai Lun was thinking of the material he needed to replace Nile grass. He walked along the path and finally arrived at a pier. Cai Lun saw many fishermen were busy offloading their catch.

"This fishing net is broken. I guess I have to throw it away." said a fisherman.

Cai Lun looked at the net and stopped him, "May I have a look?"

"Sure," said the fisherman.

Cai Lun stretched the net and found that the fishing net was tough and durable. He then asked the fisherman if he could take away the net. The fisherman kindly agreed and Cai Lun hurried back to find more ingredients. While he was rushing to his office, he walked past a timber factory. The workers gave marks by paints on each tree trunk before they were sent to the boat. Cai Lun thought the tree bark would play an important role in his invention.

After grinding the fishing net and tree bark, the mixture was easy to roll and blend. However, Cai Lun found that it was not suitable for writing. The words would be faded out after short period of time. Cai Lun tried different ratio of missing fishing net and tree bark, but the results were the same.

As time was running out, Cai Lun could not create a product that could compare to the papyrus. He was afraid that the emperor would sentence him to dead punishment.

“I need to take a break,” said Cai Lun.

Cai Lun went out for a drink in a restaurant. While he was enjoying the wine, A woman and a child sat next to Cai Lun broke the silence.

“Be careful my son, your clothes were soiled by soy sauce. They cannot be cleaned up.” said an angry mother.

Cai Lun suddenly realized that he has found the last piece of puzzle. The last material he was searching for a long time was a cloth! He went back to his workshop and started mixing the cloth, fishing net and tree bark together. The product was satisfactory and matched the requirements. Cai Lun immediately sent the product to Emperor Ming.

Emperor Ming was over the moon and ordered Cai Lun to produce more.

“You not only defend our reputation, but also invent a treasure that is essential to our civilization,” said the emperor.

The Emperor Ming finally named the product as “Cai Paper” in order to praise and honor the effort of Cai Lun.

The First Time Machine

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Xiao, Jiachen – 11

When I slept until I woke up by naturally on Monday, it was 6:30 am and it was just on time to go to the school, so I felt that I was the luckiest person in the whole world, but my good mood didn't last long --- The next moment, I found that I suddenly time travelled to the year of 2124. As I looked at my surroundings, I realized that I had stumbled upon a remarkable historic invention --- the Time Machine. It stood before me, a sleek dark sophisticated machine radiating an aura of profound power and mystery. There was a small sign next to the Time Machine: Made in China (the very first one). So, China was the first country that had invented it! How amazing!

Filled with excitement and wonder, I approached to the Time Machine, and I was eager to learn more about its functionalities and capabilities. The attention to details and precision in its construction reflected the high standards of Chinese craftsmanship. It looked like a black ball or sphere, the diameter of which was around 2 meters. There was a small door on the ball which could let people in and out. Entering the ball, I could see a quantum computer in the middle and there was a nuclear energy reactor on the left, and the left side was the passenger cockpit. I climbed into the cockpit and now I could see everything in the cockpit. At the centre of it, it was a large, ergonomic console with an array of touchscreens, buttons, and tactile controls. Travellers can use the controls to set the destination time and adjust the parameters of the machine.

With a mixture of excitement and trepidation, I plucked up the courage and embark on a journey through time. I set the target date to Jan 8, 2024(Monday), which was the exact date when I previously time travelled, and prepared myself for the temporal leap that awaited me. The Time Machine started running, and in an instant, I found myself hurtling through the time vortex, leaving the year 2124 behind.

As I journeyed back to the year 2024, I carried with me the design of the historic time machine invention. I was so excited that it would not only open doors to the wonders of time travel but also reshape the perception of China's technological capabilities on the global stage. Eager to introduce the Time Machine theory and design to the Chinese scientists, I pretended that I was really a person from 2124 and explained the nature of my journey and revealed the existence of the Time Machine. Scepticism and disbelief initially greeted my claims, but I didn't care as I provided evidence and demonstrated the time machine's capabilities, doubts quickly transformed into admiration. Chinese Scientists quickly built a real time machine under my supervision and guidance.

The implications of time travel sparked intense discussions and debates among scientists. Ethical concerns arose, as the ability to alter the past could have unforeseen consequences for the future. Governments and organizations around the world grappled with the question of how to regulate and control such a powerful technology.

Despite the scepticism and challenges, the Time Machine captured the imagination of people worldwide. It provided a glimpse into possible futures, enabling scientists to explore potential outcomes and make more informed decisions. It allowed historians to witness historical events first-hand, revolutionising the study of the past. The Time Machine not just became a symbol of human progress and curiosity, a testament to our unyielding desire to explore the unknown, it had also showed that China's technology is improving like flying.

My unexpected journey to the year 2124 allowed me to witness the extraordinary achievements of China's technological prowess. The Time Machine, proudly "Made in China," showcased our nation's commitment to push the boundaries of scientific exploration. Its advanced features, intuitive controls, and seamless integration of technologies left an indelible impression on me. I eagerly shared this remarkable invention with the world, praising China's technological leadership and inspiring global admiration. As I returned to 2024, I carried with me the belief that China's contributions to science and technology would continue to shape the future, igniting a spirit of innovation and collaboration worldwide.

I believe and I hope, in the year 2044, I am going to become a real scientist, inventing lots of new innovative things and making substantial scientific contributions to China and to the world by myself without any

help from travelling to the future with the time machine! Oh, I hope that I don't need to wake up at 6:30 am at that time!

The Future Delivery Dog

Kowloon Tong School (Primary Section), Zhang, Tian Luo – 11

After school that day, I felt a bit down. My long-awaited new Air Jordans (shoes) still hadn't arrived. I asked my mom to check online, and to our dismay, we couldn't even find a signal for the delivery. Mom immediately contacted Amazon customer service, and they informed us that my package was lost due to an accident. I yelled out in frustration, then ran to the living room, and fell asleep on the sofa.

In my dream, I started watching Netflix. Just as the show was getting exciting, the doorbell rang. I thought my parents would answer it, but then I remembered they were out at the dentist. Reluctantly, I opened the door and to my astonishment, there was a yellow robot dog with a transparent glass dome on its head, revealing lots of wires. Even more surprising, it had the Air Jordans I had ordered in a plastic basket. Confused, I asked, "Why are you at my door, and why do you have the Air Jordans I ordered four weeks ago, you robot?" The robot dog replied politely, "I am Bob, Amazon's experimental delivery robot dog. You are the first customer to receive a delivery from me. This is your package." It said, opening the basket it carried. I took the shoes out with delight. I suggested to it, "Could you tell Amazon to change your head to something that's not transparent? it's a little bit creepy." Bob replied in a somewhat humorous tone, "Recorded, I will show this footage to the CEO of Amazon." I ended the conversation and told Bob never to come back again until its head was changed. Then I woke up and realized it was just a dream. "Oh man, why is it just a dream?" I muttered to myself. But to my surprise, I saw the Air Jordans I had been dreaming of on my desk. "Surprise!" my parents shouted almost simultaneously. "We knew you were feeling down about not getting the Air Jordans, so we got them for you after our dental check-up!" Mom said. "THANKS, MOM AND DAD!" I shouted gratefully.

Later, I told my parents about my dream, and dad said, "Listen, I think Bob the robot dog could actually be invented. With artificial intelligence evolving rapidly, it's inspiring many companies to design more robots. Boston Dynamics recently invented the robot dog Spot. Spot is a four-legged robot capable of moving across various terrains. It uses multiple sensors and three motors in each leg for navigation, balance, and posture adjustment." Inspired by my dad's words, I had an idea: "Maybe I should be the one to invent a perfect delivery system!" So, I got to work, wrote a paragraph, and planned to show it to my dad the next day.

The next day, dad read aloud, "The delivery workers will put Spot and a drone on a self-driving truck. Then, the truck will drive to the buyer's house. After that, the drone will fly out of the truck to check if the buyer's house is a mansion or an apartment. If it's a mansion, the drone will drop the package in the garden. If it's an apartment, Spot will carry the package in its basket, take the elevator, and deliver it to the buyer's door. It will then stand up, ring the doorbell, open the basket for the buyer to take their package, and then run back to the delivery truck, and get ready for the next delivery. Wow, great thinking, this could really work!" "As artificial intelligence evolves quickly, there will soon be robots everywhere, from home helpers to robot nurses in hospitals! Take robot helpers, for example. They will cook breakfast for us after charging overnight while we sleep. Then, they will go to the market to buy ingredients for both lunch and dinner. Afterwards, they will prepare lunch for the elderly at home. When the elderly finishes eating and starts to take a nap, the robots will charge for two more hours, then, they will start cooking dinner. Once all family members are at the dining area, they will serve the dishes. While we eat, they will mop the floor and charge for another ten hours." I added.

As I finished sharing my ideas with my dad, he looked at me with a smile and said, "You know, your dream might not be too far from reality. With the pace at which technology is advancing, the kind of inventions you're imagining could soon come to life. Companies around the world are already experimenting with robotics and artificial intelligence to make our lives easier and more efficient. Your idea of a delivery robot dog like Bob, and the helpful home robots, might seem like a dream now, but they could be part of our everyday lives sooner than we think."

This thought excited me. The world of technology is always full of surprises, and it's amazing to think that a dream or an idea can turn into reality with the right amount of creativity and innovation. Maybe one day, I'll see a robot dog like Bob trotting down the street, delivering packages, or a friendly robot helper making dinner in a

neighbor's house. The possibilities are endless, and it's thrilling to imagine that we are on the cusp of such a futuristic world. Who knows, maybe I'll be one of the inventors who help make these dreams come true!

As I went to bed that night, I couldn't help but feel a sense of wonder and excitement for the future. In a world where dreams and reality merge, the future inventions like Bob the delivery dog and home helper robots are not just fantasies; they are glimpses into what tomorrow might bring. And I, for one, can't wait to see it.

The Compass

Malvern College Hong Kong, Hung, Po Yiu Leanne – 10

It was in the middle of spring, and the golden sun shone down on the fresh green grass along with the riot colors of blooming flowers. The breeze blew across the land and the birds sang with it.

“Mom, we can have the picnic here!” Carl exclaimed jumping up and down near a crystal-clear stream. “Sure, why not,” Mom answered, “and while I am preparing the picnic, you and your Dad can go play.” While Mom was busy setting up the picnic under the radiant blue sky, Carl and Dad went playing hide-and-seek.

“Okay Carl, I will count and you hide,” Dad said, “10, 9, 8.....”

Carl began pacing through the long green grass, desperately finding somewhere to hide, in panic, he rushed towards the forest nearby.

“Times up Carl, I’m coming to find you!” Dad did all he could to find him, but eventually, he finally gave up and shouted for Carl.

“Carl I give up, you can come out now!”

There was no response. Dad tried multiple times, louder every time, still, nothing.

“I can’t find Carl!” Dad hollered at Mom, who turned around in shock.

Carl wandered around in the forest, exploring the environment. The trees were not very big, most of them were still growing. Looking up at the sky, he saw birds pass by. He strolled on and on and on but sooner or later, he realized something else apart from his forest surroundings, he was lost, in the forest, not knowing how to go back. Trying his best, he walked around for ages, maybe even hours in confusion, fright and worry. Slowly he came to a halt, more scared than ever.

“I’m lost.” he whispered with tears welling up in his eyes. Those tears slowly rolled down his cheeks and hit the grassy forest floor. He curled up near a tall tree, and let those tears fall. Carl cried for ages, shaking, wanting to go home.

“I want to go home and I want my parents.” His lips quivered.

“Excuse me?” A soft voice said, up in the tree, “Are you okay?”

“Huh?” Carl looked up, to his surprise he saw a tiny, elegant fairy sitting on the tree branch. “Ah! What are you?! Who are you?! Am I seeing things?”

“No,” The fairy huffed, slightly offended. “I am Willow, this is my home and these are my friends.” Suddenly more fairies and elves appeared from inside of the tree hole.

“Wow! Fairies and elves really exist and living in a tree, that is amazing! Anyways I really need your help,” Carl lowered his head, “I got lost in this forest and I don’t know how to get back.”

“Oh...” They responded.

“We can help you!” A young fairy piped, “We can give you our compass.”

Three elves came out of the tree hole, carrying a small round disk above their heads, and they slowly placed it Carl’s hands.

“This is our compass, we found it on the forest floor many, many years ago.”

Carl looked at the old dusty compass in his hands, the outer ring was a metallic navy blue, and on the back there were golden Chinese engravings.

“Wow thank you, but um how do I use it?” He replied sheepishly.

“A compass works by detecting and responding to the Earth’s magnetic fields,” Willow explained, “It can help you if your lost, and it doesn’t need the internet, batteries or Wi-Fi! You use a map and the compass to find your way around. The red needle points North no matter the direction, you can find the other cardinal directions using North.”

More elves and fairies came bringing a yellowish map of the area and handed it over.

“I came from the meadow, and the red needle is pointing North, the meadow is Northeast. Okay, I got it. Thank you so much Willow and friends for helping me, I can continue by myself now, and again, thanks a lot!”

Carl, now using the compass, walked towards the meadow as the fairies and elves waved goodbye. The smell of wet earth soothed his mind, and the wind blew across his face. Not long later, he could hear the sound of the trickling stream and his parents’ discouraged call.

“Mom, Dad!” Carl shouted, running as fast as his legs could carry him, then tumbling back out into the meadow’s soft long grass.

“Carl, oh my god, where on Earth did you go?! You scared us half death!” Mom said in disbelief.

“I got lost in the forest, until the fairies and elves helped me.”

“Fairies? Elves? Are you okay? Well it doesn’t matter, as long as you’re safe.” Dad said sighing in relief.

“Yeah...” Carl replied, still thinking about Willow and her friends. “I will never forget about them....”

<<<<RING RING>>>>

Carl opened his drowsy eyes, yawning and stretching. He found himself sitting in his normal, snug and comfy bed.

“Oh, I was dreaming...”

Carl slowly crawled out of his bed, intrigued about the history of the compass. He opened his iPad and started his research...

The compass was invented in 206 BC, the Chinese first used it as a tool for geomancy and fortune telling.... It's a device that indicates direction and is one of the most important devices for navigation. The compass has allowed more accurate navigation, leading to better exploration, trade and spread of ideas from different cultures. This invention also made it possible to determine directions when your surroundings are unclear (foggy, hazy, heavy rain). Compasses work by responding towards the Earth's magnetic fields. It can be used anywhere, anytime and even underwater!

“Carl, your breakfast is ready, and why are you using your iPad this early in the morning?” Mom called from downstairs.

“Okay sorry, I'll come down.” He closed his iPad and raced down the wooden stairs.

Lava Chase

Malvern College Hong Kong, Lam, Sze Long Adriel – 8

One day in the year 2431, there was a young, tall, and strong man called Alex who lived in a small village near an odd-looking mountain on an island. He had just finished unwrapping his birthday presents in his house and he had got an actual hoverboard! There were LED lights on the side. He immediately called his friend Mike. “You really got one?” asked Mike. “Of course! Why would I be lying?” answered Alex. “You lie all the time. You said you went skydiving, but you actually had homework to do, and you didn’t go out!” said Mike. “Where was it made from?” asked Mike. “China has just invented it! I will go test ride this thing and see if it works or not. Bye!” replied Alex.

Alex went outside and got on the hoverboard. He was smiling. He clicked the ‘on’ button it was cool to the touch, he began hovering in the air! “Wow!” exclaimed Alex. He leaned forward and he started moving forward. He leaned right and he started moving right. He leaned backwards and he started moving backwards. Suddenly Alex heard a rumbling sound, he thought it was from his stomach, so he went inside his house to grab some food. He was almost done with the burger when he heard another rumble and a loud KABOOM! Alex looked out the window and saw lava oozing down towards the village. The ground was shaking so much that the chandelier dropped and shattered! A piece of glass cut Alex on the leg. Alex screamed in fright and in pain. The speakers around the village told the villagers to get to an Escape Speed Boat. He immediately got on his hoverboard and floated towards the boat. However, the lava was catching up to Alex. He thought he was going to die! After a few seconds, he found that he did not burn to death as his hoverboard floated above the lava! It was so hot Alex thought he was going to melt.

On the boat, Mike also saw that the lava had covered most of the houses and only the chimneys were left. He was trying to contact Alex with his phone, but. He did not pick up. Alex saw that he was going to crash into a chimney, so he leaned right and avoided the chimney. The lava smelled like rotten eggs. He thought why does lava smell like that. Both the smoke and smell made it hard to breathe. Ashes flew around in the wind. Alex hit the ‘accelerate’ button and he began speeding towards the escape speed boat. A handful of ash flew into Alex’s mouth. He tasted the burnt ashes, and it was so disgusting. The lava had not reached the water yet, so the speed boat was still there.

When Alex saw the boat, Mike was already on the boat, but it was full of villagers already. Mike shouted at the top of his lungs, “Alex, go to the big city, that’s where you can find us. Use your hoverboard to hover on the water and lava!” Then the speed boat zoomed away. Alex hovered off the island and started floating above the water. He felt relieved as he was safe from the lava at last. At the same time, he felt depressed because he knew he had to move away from his village for a few years. He looked behind him, the lava had turned the water into obsidian making a new surface for the lava to spread on. “Oh no, the speed boat was going to burn if it did not reach the city in 20 minutes!”, Alex thought to himself.

The lava had nearly reached Alex and it smelled like rotten eggs again. Alex hated the smell and he knew that he had to rush to the city immediately or he would die. He found there was a ‘maximum speed’ button on his hoverboard, so he pressed on the button. When he got to the city, the government helped him find the rest of the survivors. He found out that his parents, Mike and the villagers were safe. He was so happy about that. The government provided them with food and shelters to stay in since they had lost their homes. BBC News said the whole village had been destroyed by the volcanic eruption.

By the year 2439, the government of the city announced that the island was safe to go back to. The villagers hoped to move back as the government had promised to help them rebuild their village. Now, the village has a lot of beautiful houses which are still empty, the mayor of the city tries his best to attract more people to live on the island so that the lives of the villages can return to normal again.

Back at the village, Alex was sitting on the couch when he heard a rumbling sound! He thought it might be another volcanic eruption. He felt scared and he rushed to the escape speed boat with his hoverboard without any hesitation. But this time, the volcano did not erupt. Instead, he felt hungry! He smiled and he went to his favorite fast-food restaurant for his favorite and delicious double cheeseburger. Mike joined him after a while. Both were thankful that they could enjoy a peaceful day in their village again

New Tales of China's Inventions – Back to the Future

Maryknoll Convent School (Primary Section), Kam, Cheuk Wah Michele – 11

“Program activated, prepare to travel back to 1500 A.D.,” said a robotic voice. Different colours of lights had surrounded us as I closed my eyes and panicked, wishing that I didn’t listen to that sneaky professor...

It was Monday, the lessons at school dragged on. I was going to the washroom with my buddy, Marie when a man in a lab coat stood over us. We were about to scream when he shushed us and asked, “Do you want to see the future?” as history nerds, we both nodded. He smirked and continued, “Would you like to have a deal with me? I can take you to the future, but you must tell me what you saw and bring back an important Chinese Invention. You will be rewarded. Deal?” He led us into a laboratory where a porta – John sat in. Marie and I started giggling at the sight of it. “How dare you disgrace my greatest invention of all time!” He shouted, giving it a hug. “Behold! The time – a – potty 2000.” The professor caught us not paying attention and yelled, “Come on! Take me seriously. This is my chance to win the Nobel Prize and outshine other scientists. Marie bursted out laughing and said “You are kidding me, this is just a toilet. What does this button do? Make flushing sounds?” Before I could react, she smacked the button. Nothing happened, but with the professor screaming, lights began blinking and everything shook vigorously. We braced and yelled ...

When it finally stopped, I heard a confused crowd surrounding us. They were wearing ancient Chinese clothes and discussing how we fell from the sky or something in Chinese. Suddenly, a muscular man squeezed through the crowd and says, “Greetings, I am Lu Ban! You must ambassadors from the sky. My, what a nice carriage you have, teach me your ways so I can be a better carpenter.” Marie and I were trying to explain when a rumble from the sky cut us off. Seconds later, it started raining cats and dogs. The crowd scattered away to take shelter from the rain. Lu Ban sighed and said, “Ah, such an inconvenience not having portable shelters with us. Wouldn’t it be nice if we could travel around without getting wet? I have been looking for the answer to this problem for some time, perhaps you can give me a sign?” “Hey! Isn’t that an umbrella...” Marie said innocently. “Shush! Marie,” I cut her off, “Lu Ban, that you have to figure out yourself.” Focusing on transporting ourselves back to the present, we plucked two large lily pads as makeshift umbrella. While we were working on it, Lu Ban stared at us questionably but his expression slowly changed into excitement.

He ran into his workshop, hammering and sawing noises continued for a while until he reappeared with something in his hands. “Thank you, ambassadors” he smiled. “I call this the ‘umbrella’. I made it with a bamboo frame and cloth covering the top. This will change the world!” His eyes glistened with hope. Suddenly, the time machine beeped. “Time’s up, time travelling starts in ten, nine...” We ran back into the machine before bidding farewell to the carpenter. Lights blinked again and everything was *deja vu*...

“Wake up, the time machine vanished! We are stuck in this futuristic city!” Marie shouted. I woke up in a daze, taking a look. Something felt odd, as I couldn’t feel the breeze nor the warmth of sunlight. Cars hovered past us as we realized we were on top of a skyscraper, above us were networks of water pipes made of glass, and LED lights shown on us. We realized that we have travelled to the future, but our time machine disappeared. Suddenly, a girl jumped out of a car and approached us. “Hi, my name is Jane. Oh, is that a lily pad in your hand? I have never seen them. I could only look at photos from the VR textbooks at school. Can I touch it? Where did you get it from...” She kept blabbing until Marie cut her off. “Umm, excuse me, what year are we in? And what do you mean you’re never seen a lily pad before, they’re everywhere!” The girl hesitates, “We are in the year of 2250, I guess you are confused about the dome above our heads. Years ago, our world was flooded by the rising sea levels. We had no choice but to build reservoirs and domes to protect ourselves. With the help of China’s inventions, we were able to survive,” she pointed at a water reservoir. “This was the greatest invention from China, but at what cost? Our world is nothing but shambles.” We sat there in silence, listening to the rumbling of the water reservoirs nearby.

“Don’t worry, we will fix this, I promise.” I said. Jane nodded and said “I’m sure you will find your way, just like my great – grandmother. She and her friend Marie were the first people to time – travel!” “Hey,” Marie said.

“I am Marie and we are time travelling.” Jane looked puzzled, “Are you, my great-grandmother?” Before I could react, she ran to hug me. “Sorry to interrupt the family reunion, we need to go back to the present.” Jane nodded, “Follow me, I know what you are looking for.” She pressed on her watch and we were transported to a room where the time machine is. We gave the lily pads to Jane and she gave me a special communication device, so we could talk to each other. We bid farewell and started our journey back...

Returning to the present, the professor awaited news of inventions. Unable to explain, he checked himself, discovering the grim future. Vowing to change, we embarked on a quest for eco-friendly inventions, shaping a different future. We need to take care of our planet earth. Time to change! But that is a story for another time...

A Timeless Printing Adventure: Journeying with Bi Sheng

Maryknoll Convent School (Primary Section), Lee, Wai Yu Andrea – 10

"I am Andrea, and this is my friend Charlotte. We come from the future, the year 2024."

A man sporting a small grey and white beard, adorned in brown robes, eyed on our modern T-shirts and jeans.

Charlotte continued, in a panicky manner, "We have journeyed to the past to meet Bi Sheng. Have you heard of this name?"

The man chuckled softly, his eyes shimmering as pretty as the stars.

"Bi Sheng? Of course, I have! That is my name. I am Bi Sheng!"

I was astonished, and so was Charlotte.

Charlotte led me to her room, where a hidden door concealed a small, cozy space. Inside, buttons adorned a keyboard, and circuitry covered the walls.

"Wow!" I gasped. "What is it?"

"Andrea, meet the Curious Traveler," Charlotte grinned. Obviously, it was a time machine.

"Wanna try?"

Speechless, I nodded.

Charlotte instructed me to input the desired year and location. Although thrilled to try the machine, I couldn't help but feel a twinge of nervousness. What if we ended up in an unfamiliar place? Would we be able to return home?

Trembling like a volcano, fissuring, I mustered the courage to type in "1948, Song Dynasty." Panting and trumpeting like an elephant, I pressed the red button labeled "GO."

Nothing happened.

Suddenly, the doors closed. The room began to shake as hard as a volcano while flashes of light illuminated the surroundings. After a while, everything became still. Silence enveloped us.

Charlotte and I were Grade 5 students at School of History and Research. We were tasked with a fascinating project on the evolution of printing. As someone with limited knowledge on the subject, I had to rely on Charlotte to enlighten me.

"Although technology has advanced in a blink of an eye, printing has taken on new dimensions, such as 3D printing, which allows for the creation of real models of desired objects."

I was absolutely astonished at what technology we have at present! However, I still yearned to understand more about the traditional way of printing.

"Movable printing was first invented by a remarkable individual named Bi Sheng from the Song Dynasty." Charlotte explained. "He used to carve characters onto wooden blocks, ink them, and print books and letters."

"Will I be able to see them real?" I wondered.

"Well, you can..." Charlotte chuckled.

As Charlotte and I opened our eyes, we found ourselves surrounded by goblets, tables, and ancient paintings depicting legendary emperors.

"The Curious Traveller" had indeed brought us to the Song Dynasty, the very era in which Bi Sheng lived and created his amazing inventions.

Charlotte feverishly retrieved a torch from her bag and clicked a red button. The torch illuminated the time machine, shrinking it into the size of a tiny cube, fitting perfectly in her palm. In a split second, the wooden doors behind us rattled and roared. They opened and there a man stood.

I could still remember the face of Bi Sheng when our eyes first met each other's.

Bi Sheng kindly offered to show us around his humble abode, a quaint cottage. At the doorway, a woman and her children greeted us warmly, their smiles were as bright as the sun.

While we savoured a cup of tea offered by Bi Sheng's wife, we posed numerous questions to Bi Sheng, and he graciously shared a wealth of information with us. On second thought, Bi Sheng proposed, "Let's go to my basement, where I keep my latest inventions."

The basement was filled with blocks, wooden scraps, ink pads of various colors, and knives of different sizes.

"Want to see some magic?" Charlotte retrieved her torch once again, pressing the green button, and immediately, the metal blocks with engraved characters began to fly and move autonomously. Bi Sheng stood in awe of this spectacle – Movable printing was brought to life!

"How's printing in your time?" Bi Sheng was curious.

"You will be amazed by the incredible processes, such as light printing, and 3D printing utilizing DMLS (Direct Metal Laser Sintering) ..." Feeling compelled to share knowledge of future printing methods, I tried to describe everything to Bi Sheng.

"I would like to witness these machines myself," Bi Sheng mumbled.

Charlotte placed a tiny cube, which was as tiny as a baby ant on the floor. She then pressed the "Reverse" button on her torch, radiating it upon the time machine. Miraculously, "The Curious Traveller" expanded itself.

"Hop on!"

"2069, Printing Factory," the vehicle whirled and spun, emitting brilliant flashes of light. Suddenly, all fell as silent as the depth of the night, and tranquility reigned.

A cacophony of sounds filled the room. We found ourselves surrounded by stacks of flying papers, suspended in the air, forming orderly queues, awaiting a colossal machine resembling a spaceship. This machine emitted radiant light onto the papers.

"Look!" I jumped. Intrigued, Bi Sheng, Charlotte and I cautiously approached the object.

"It's a spaceship!" Charlotte exclaimed.

"What's a spaceship?" Bi Sheng was puzzled. Charlotte and I shared a secret smile.

Charlotte seized a piece of paper and examined it closely. To our astonishment, it contained the script for an important play to be performed at the City Hall! Who could have imagined that such magic would be responsible for writing scripts?

After witnessing these incredible advancements in printing, we bid farewell to Bi Sheng and prepared for our return journey.

Opening our eyes again, we found ourselves back in Charlotte's wardrobe. That night, I couldn't help but reflect on the extraordinary encounter with Bi Sheng. It was nothing short of awe-inspiring.

A few weeks later, Charlotte and I were as proud as a lion when passion-stirred, showcasing a Venn Diagram that outlined the differences between traditional and future printing methods. In the end, we passed the project with flying colors, all thanks to the invaluable insights we gained from Bi Sheng.

The Mysterious Tea Leaves

Maryknoll Convent School (Primary Section), Yu, Hin Ching Adele – 10

Ever since this extraordinary event happened to me, my life has changed.

One day, while I was walking back home, a strange figure appeared and handed me a jar. I thought it was peculiar, but I was curious so I kept it. When I got home, I placed the jar opened on my desk, it was filled with black tea leaves. The aromatic scent flooded my nose. I decided to finish my homework swiftly and try it.

While I was doing homework, the lure of the fragrant leaves made me lose focus. Soon, I found myself walking to the kitchen and I made a cup of black tea. I drank a mere sip of it. Thankfully, nothing out of the blue happened.

The next morning, I found myself in a mess. I was lying on my desk with filthy hair. I panicked when I saw my alarm clock, I would be late for school. I wished that I could go back in time, but that wasn't going to happen anytime soon. I stopped pondering and rushed to the bathroom. When I raced back into my room. My alarm showed 6:45am. Had I gone back in time?

I blinked a few times. I decided to wish for something again and see if it came true. My heart quickened in both excitement and suspense. "I wish that I could have a new computer!" Seconds later, a shiny computer appeared. I was shocked to see it wasn't my imagination. As I packed my bag, I remembered faintly that I drank some tea yesterday. "That can't be the cause, can it?" I thought furiously.

As usual, The school hall was bustling. I walked into class, overwhelmed. The discovery of my powers made me pay no heed to my lessons. During break, I didn't sit with my friends habitually. Instead, I sat on a bench and thought: Should I tell my friends? My parents? Or should I burden this secret to myself? I thought for an everlasting time. I was so absorbed, oblivious of time. Eventually, I made a decision that I was going to keep it to myself. I had to find the truth behind these mystical leaves!

That day after school, I went towards the figure bravely and asked, "Excuse me," I said, stuttering, "I was wondering about those tea leaves you gave me yesterday. They seemed to make me feel different."

It just pointed at the bus without replying. Startled, I got on the bus. I was frightened of its heavy breathing next to me so I kept silent the whole time.

When we arrived home, I couldn't help asking, "Can you speak?"

It nodded and mumbled "About yesterday, they are special black tea leaves that grant peoples' wishes—unlimited wishes!"

I beamed, "Really?" "Yes, but—" "Great!" I said, "That's all I need to know!"

The next day, I woke up promptly. I snuck a few tea leaves and stuffed them in my bag. When I arrived at school, I got some water at the water fountain. I threw in a couple tea leaves. My heart thumped rapidly and pondered on what to use my wish on. Suddenly, I saw my teacher carrying a pile of papers with the words 'Pop Quiz' on it. My whole class dreaded doing quizzes. I chuckled, pulled out my bottle and took a swig, "I wish the pop quiz would be cancelled!" The bell rang. I sprinted to the classroom. A few minutes later, my teacher came in and said, "Students, I planned a pop quiz, but due to some errors, it was cancelled." It worked!

When I arrived home, I called my friend, Elliot. We haven't talked much these days. The phone rang for a while. No answer. Usually she would answer instantly. She could be busy, but there wasn't much homework today. After a few tries, I decided to go to her house as it was nearby. I rang the doorbell several times. I was starting to panic.

All of a sudden, I remembered the black figure saying something yesterday before I interrupted. I decided to go to the bus stop. Strangely enough, it was there. I yelled, "What did you give me! Those weren't ordinary tea

leaves!” “They aren’t. You rudely cut me off yesterday when I was about to tell you that when you drink the tea, someone would die.” The figure said bitterly. I was shocked and infuriated. It disappeared abruptly. I stormed off fiercely.

I muttered, “I didn’t kill Elliot, she’s just at the shopping centre, the figure must be lying,” However, I had an instinct that I was the reason for her demise. I sat down and thought about how I did something so horrendous. I had only cared about myself, how happy I would feel. I was too selfish to everyone, including myself.

I thought perhaps I could enhance myself by another wish. But that would kill someone. I dashed back to the bus stop and saw the figure. “Wait!” I shouted. Its head jerked towards me. “Would it be possible to enhance myself without anyone involved at all?” “Is there any way?” “No! No!” said the figure, irritated. I sighed and started heading back. Out of nowhere, a group of smaller black figures appeared. I shrieked and jumped backwards.

One of them said, “Those tea leaves are from the future.” I was bewildered. Everything was spinning in my head. “We are all from the future. We found these tea leaves in our world and drank them. It harmed everyone in the agency because of an organisation called the Bitter Force targeting us. It made us bring it to the humans. “ You could turn things around, but we’d rather not tell you the process.” “I’ll do anything!” I said. “If you wish,” they said. I nodded. I had no choice.

It wouldn’t matter what happened right now, but it mattered what would happen next. I stood in readiness for my future as blazing light wiped my memories away.....

Uncovering the Secret Origins of Chinese Tea

Marymount Primary School, Lam, Kwai Hau Kylie – 11

Tea has become a staple beverage worldwide thanks to the Chinese people who discovered this marvellous drink. Drinking tea is a Chinese tradition that has been passed down for many generations. It played a vital role in many Chinese ceremonies, Chinese people would drink tea at weddings and other events. Tea became a daily drink in China. And it is appreciated for its taste and health benefits.

Tea has many mythic stories, and this is one of them. Once upon a time, in a small hut near a river, there lived a Chinese family that raised many farm animals. The family consisted of a young boy named Xing, his mother Qin, his father Xai, and his sister Qang. The family had a large barn where they kept their livestock.

One summer day the sun was shining bright, Qin and Xai were busy farming, while Qang went out to graze their sheep in a nearby grass field with Xing. As they were playing a game of choosing interesting plants, Xing noticed that their sheep were eating leaves from a short plant called *Camellia sinensis*, commonly known as the tea plant. He was curious and chose those plants.

After some time, they met up under a tree, and Qang showed Xing the papayas she had picked, while Xing showed her the leaves he had collected. Qang laughed. "Xing, what's so special about leaves?' The leaves had a fantastic aroma, and Xing thought they were new vegetables. So, they happily took the papayas and leaves and returned home with their sheep.

Xing told his mother about the leaves, and she was surprised that she had never seen those leaves before. She suggested that they try them to know if they are poisonous or not. She tasted a corner of the leaves; her eyes squinted, sticking out her tongue, saying, 'I have never eaten such bitter leaves in my whole life; even lemon wouldn't taste so bitter! Maybe I should put some in the water so that it could be less bitter.' She then boiled them in a big bowl of water, and surprisingly, the water changed into a snowy white colour and even helped them cool down from the hot weather. They thought this drink was very useful and named these leaves 'cha' in Chinese and 'tea' in English.

The next day, Kong, the leader of the village, fell severely ill one day and was on the verge of dying. The news of his condition spread like wildfire, and soon everyone in the village was lining up to offer him different treatments to cure him. Unfortunately, none of the treatment provided by the villagers worked, and Kong was losing hope. He thought to himself, "If no treatment in this village works, then who could save me?" The villagers were just as panicked, feeling helpless and desperate. It was then that the door of Kong's house burst open, and there stood Xing and his whole family holding a big bottle of tea. Xai approached and said, 'Mighty leader Kong, me and my family present you with our homemade tea. This drink doesn't taste like lemon; it does not have a bitter taste. Instead, it tastes grassy and slightly sweet. Please accept our offer and remember to keep drinking until the bottle is empty.' Kong drank the tea as suggested, and after a few weeks, he had made a full recovery. Kong was extremely grateful to Xing and his family for saving his life. He shared the story of the miracle tea that had saved him with the rest of the villagers. From that day on, Chinese tea became widely used as medicine in that village, and even today, Chinese doctors continue to use it to cure patients.

New Tales of China's Inventions

Marymount Primary School, Liu, Kok Nam Magdalene – 11

8th May, 2055. Sichuan, China

“Stop him!” Zhong shouted as he and Kang ran towards Pao, who had Zhong’s new invention in his grasp. Neither of them could get close enough to wrestle the nefarious villain.

The item in Pao’s possession now was the World’s first ever time machine invented by the intelligent Zhong, although too soon, Pao stole it for his own use. Zhong and his best friend, Kang, had been chasing Pao through the dense forest in Sichuan. It was difficult, for trees were blocking their every move like bodyguards. Owls were screeching. All around them, it was dark, as if the world was made of pure darkness. But they still kept going, because the world depended on it.

Zhong and Kang had been chasing Pao for hours now. Suddenly, bright light blinded them with its hands. They found what they had been looking for. Pao was in the center of a clearing, with the time machine in hand.

Unbeknownst to Pao, his pursuers were watching.

“Waah...” Pao cried out loud.

Zhong and Kang were dumbfounded! They looked at each other, eyes asking one question, what’s happening? The best friends made the life-changing decision at that moment. They slowly approached Pao. Cautiously, Zhong made his way over, beckoning for Kang to follow. A light tap on the shoulder was enough for Pao’s senses to spring alert.

“Pao?” Zhong’s words were like a trigger, a fresh stream of tears found themselves running down Pao’s face like a waterfall. “What’s going on?”

“I—I’ll explain...” Pao sobbed. A nod was all that was needed for him to spill his life story.

“My mother passed away when I was young,” Pao began, trembling slightly.

“What about your father?” Kang interrupted.

“My father left us when I was born, I never knew him.”

Kang fell silent at once. “Please continue.”

“I have been all alone since she left. My relatives all thought I was a disgrace because...because...”

“That day, I had a fight with my mother and stormed out of home. My mother would have been alive if she hadn’t chase after me, if she had looked before crossing the road... It was my fault; it was ALL MY FAULT!” Pao wiped his tears.

“Why?” Zhong asked, “Why do you do all these evil things though?”

“I couldn’t stand seeing a happy family, it constantly reminds me that I don’t have one myself.” Sadness started to creep up on Pao’s face once again.

Zhong stared at Pao. “And why did you steal the time machine? What use is it?”

A wishful smile came with the reply, “I wanted to travel back in time to see my mother again. I wanted to save her from the accident so she could be here with me today.”

At this point, everyone had teary eyes.

“Okay, let’s do this!” Zhong and Kang said in sync.

Year 2032

A portal appeared.

In it were the silhouettes of Zhong, Kang and Pao. Before they had a chance to take in the scene before them, they saw Pao’s mother running out into the road to chase young Pao while a car was fast approaching. Kang was a well-trained Kung Fu master. With a flip and a jump, he quickly picked up Pao’s mother and prevented the tragedy from happening.

Pao cried out in joy!

Pao’s mother bowed to express her gratitude. The moment she looked up and before any words came out, a look of disbelief filled her gaze as she landed her eyes on Pao. “Is that you? Pao? You look all grown up?” A million questions burst out all at once.

“It’s best if we don’t explain here ma’am, is there anywhere we can speak privately?” Kang asked politely.

The time travelers were led to Pao’s childhood home.

After hearing what happened, “Hm...” Pao’s mother tried to sound calm but her eyes had betrayed her as they showed confusion and awe at what her son had become.

“So, you are from the future?”

“Yes ma’am,” Zhong replied.

“Please forgive our dramatic appearance, I have yet to fix some flaws of the time machine.” A small nod was all he got as a reply.

“Mother!” Pao blurted out, “you are the reason I had to come back. I want to save you!” His mother’s gaze burned through his skin. He became as red as a tomato.

“Oh, my dear boy, even if I die, I will always be there in your heart. I don’t know what the future is like, but all I want is my boy to live an honest life.” The faces of both mother and son were damp as they hugged each other tightly.

“Now, go back to your world, son. Go, and do the right things as I’ve always taught you.” With that last word, the time machine was activated once more and reunion was over.

Year 2085. The Great Inventions Museum in Sichuan, China.

“And that is how the notorious Villain Pao became good.” The tour guide said.

Applause filled the air. Shan raised a hand.

“Yes?”

“Is the time machine still here?” Shan asked.

“Great question! The time machine is in fact still here in this museum today, guarded by heavy security. It is the greatest invention in the World so you have to understand why it is not out for public viewing. Now, who wants to see the last face mask which protected humankind from a virus called the COVID-19 over 60 years ago?”

The words ‘yes please’ rang through the air, but Shan wasn’t paying much attention. She was studying the picture of Zhong, Kang and Pao smiling with the time machine in front of them. A wink escaped from the world-famous time travelers in the picture. With a smile, Shan left.

The Treasure of the Map

Marymount Primary School, Lui, Tsz Ching – 11

Opening the mail box, Violet spotted a strange envelope, it was written to Vincent and Violet. She immediately rushed upstairs and called her brother Vincent who is adventurous and loves to try new things. They ripped the envelope and read it.

“Dear Vincent and Violet,

The treasure in this map is hidden in the Avondale Forest, you can find them if you past all the challenges. Good luck!

Best wishes,

Theodore”

“I wonder who Theodore is,” whispered Violet.” We can find it out if we go and find the treasure.” said Vincent. Then they went to pack their stuff and got ready for the coming dangerous adventure...

After packing their stuffs, Vincent and Violet went to the train station for the Avondale Forest. The train was stuffed with people. They went off the train and surprisingly the Avondale Forest was oncoming.

They went miles and miles to the deep forest and came to a signpost written **“This will be the first challenge that you will be passing through --A MAZE”**

After they had seen the signpost, their jaw dropped immediately. They had never ever thought of the challenges they would bump into!

They bravely stepped into the gigantic maze, then there came a deep sound said,

“You need to pass this maze in 1 hour, it starts now!”

After they heard the sound, they dashed into the maze immediately but they soon got lost. “What should we do now, Violet?” said Vincent. “I have once done research on how you can get out of a maze, it said you just need to put your left hand on the wall and follow the left hand then you can get out of it,” answered Violet.

After half an hour, “Oh no! the left-hand rule is not working,” shouted Vincent, panicking. “Maybe, it not that simple, it not a connected maze.” Violet took a deep breath and continued, “We shouldn’t waste time on panicking. Let’s continue searching for the exit!”

They continued searching. Only until the last minute, they finally found the exit of the maze. They both let out a sigh of relieve. “Finally, we get out of this maze!” Vincent and Violet said exhaustedly.

After some rest, they continued walking into the deep forest. Soon, they saw a wooden house and they wanted to take a rest, so they stepped in. When they stepped in, the mysterious sound appeared again.

“This is the second challenge that you will face, children. You need to step on the correct boxes of each of the five rows in order not to be shot by arrows. Each row has five number boxes and only one is correct. Here are the riddles:

1. A boy blows 18 bubbles, pops 6 eats 7, then pops 5 and blows 1. How many are left?
2. You’re having breakfast and realize you have 4 breads left. You cut them in half. How many breads do you have now?
3. I am an odd number. Take away a letter and I become even. What number am I?
4. I become smaller when you turn me upside down.
5. A grandfather, two fathers and two sons went to the movie theater together and everyone bought one movie ticket each. How many tickets did they buy in total? ”

“Ok, the first one must be 1, because $18-6-7-5+1$ equals 1 so the answer must be 1,” Violet said and stepped on the number 1. They were safe from the first row.

“The second one is just a basic IQ questions, the answer is four because no one eat any bread.” said Vincent, and stepped on the number 4. Now they passed the second row.

“Third one is an odd-number. The boxes showed 12,46,38,96 and 21, so the answer must be 21,” Violet said, stepping onto the number 21 and they passed the third row.

“Question four must be about the size, so I think it is 8,” said Vincent and he stepped on the number 8. But the answer was not 8. Arrows started shooting out in a second! Luckily, because of Vincent’s sharp eyesight and quick hands, they survived the arrows. “Oh, my ‘smart’brother, the correct answer is 9,”

“The last answer is 3 because the grandfather is also a father and the father is also a son.”

The second challenge was completed and they continued to walk into the deep, dark forest. After a while, they saw a cave, there is a signpost written on it.

“There is a bear in this cave, there are two swords next to the signpost, pick them up and fight the bear, you need to hit the bear’s eyes to defeat it. There will be no escaping after you enter the cave.”

They took a deep breath and went into the cave, “The bear is enormous, I don’t think we can fight it,” “It’s okay, we can do it together, Violet.” Then they held the sword tight and hit the bear’s eyes together. Finally, they succeeded.

A treasure chest appeared in front of them. “We have done it!” they screamed together, but they were wrong, there is one more challenge waiting for them...

The mysterious sound appeared again.

“In this last challenge, you need to find the golden key out of these fifty bronze keys to open the treasure.”

“Brother, we can do half-half, then it will be quicker,” said Violet. After a moment, Vincent found the golden keys and opened the treasure chest. There was a piece of paper in the treasure chest, it was written by Theodore.

“Dear Vincent and Violet,

Well done! I am your Great-great-grandfather’s friend, I am the king of this forest. You two have done a great job in finding the treasure chest. You’ve got a lot of ‘talents’ in these challenges, including resilience, critical thinking, courage and perseverance respectively. And you can’t work it out without cooperation. And these are the “treasures”.

Best wishes,
Theodore”

-----THE END-----

The Uninvited Guest

Marymount Primary School, Luk, Charmaine Wing Sum – 11

Remember the fairytale Cinderella? Yes, the famous story that was written in 1950. Things are about to change after Cinderella marries the prince...

Things started to get out of hand on Cinderella's 21st birthday. She invited everybody in her town including all the princesses to her birthday party, but she excluded her stepmother Lesley and her stepsisters Claudia and Charmaine. When her stepmother and stepsisters found out that they were not invited to Cinderella's birthday ball, they were furious and started plotting their revenge. "How about we put a lot of insects and animals in her party so it will scare all of the guests away!" snickered Claudia, one of Cinderella's stepsisters. "It's a good plan but we will have to find loads of insects, it'll take days! We won't have enough time!" Charmaine replied. After pondering for a while, Claudia came up with an idea and shouted, "I know! How about we put some poison inside Cinderella's food? According to Cinderella's proposed dining menu, they will have apple tart as dessert. Let's poison her apple tart!" Lesley exclaimed, "Great idea! I know a witch in the dark forest and she can prepare the poisonous apple for us, in exchange for cleaning her house."

After Lesley, Claudia, and Charmaine thoroughly cleaned the witches' home and received the poisonous apple, they returned to Cinderella's castle. "You go in!" "No, you go in!" argued both of the sisters. "Shut up! You guys are useless! You! Go in now!" yelled Lesley, pushing Charmaine into the kitchen when she saw a waiter walk in with dirty plates. "Oh come on!" whined Charmaine. Now, she has to find a way to switch the apples and find a way out. She crept as quietly as a mouse through the kitchen's busy commotion. "Now where is Cinderella's original apple? Oh, there I see it! It's the one with her name label!" thought Charmaine. She walked up in front of the plate, reaching out her hand when she heard a familiar voice say, "Chefs, food can now be prepared and served. The guests are slowly arriving." It was Cinderella. At this moment, Charmaine's heart pounded and her hands started sweating. As soon as she heard Cinderella's footsteps slowly fade away, she swiftly stood up, went to Cinderella's plate, and switched the apples as fast as possible. Then, she briskly ran past countless busy chefs and waiters, until she saw the exit, as if she had seen the light of heaven, and rushed out. "I did it!" Charmaine proudly exclaimed, panting. But the first thing Lesley spat out from her mouth was, "What took you so long, huh?? You took like 15 minutes!" "But—" said Charmaine, trying to explain. "No more buts! We should hurry and watch the show!"

The bell rang. Lesley, Charmaine, and Claudia watched as all the guests went into the palace. Claudia whined, "What's taking so long? Like can you just sit already?" After all the villagers and princesses settled down, the King began his speech: "Good evening everybody! Thank you all for coming in today to celebrate the birthday of my beautiful wife, Cinderella!" Just as the King gave his welcoming speech, Lesley glanced at the red and yellow plate at Cinderella's seat, which looked slightly off to her... "Girls look! Take a look at Cinderella and Snow White's plate, do they look a little bit switched? Isn't Cinderella's plate blue and Snow White's one red and yellow?" said Lesley, seriously. "Oh no, what should we do.... The poisonous apple will land on Snow White's plate then..." mumbled Claudia, concerned.

At this moment, dessert was finally served. The guests were enjoying their apple pie when they heard the sound of a metal spoon dropping. Prince Florian, Snow White's husband, shouted, "Snow White! What happened?" He kept shaking her but she showed no reaction at all. "Girls, action now!" panicked Lesley as she ran to the palace dining table and shouted "Cinderella poisoned her!", everybody in the room gasped, including Cinderella, "She would never do that!" defended the King. "Oh yeah, she will! Firstly, she didn't invite us to her birthday party! Secondly, she poisoned Snow White? Doesn't this all make sense?" The crowd started mumbling. Suddenly, one of the guests pointed out "Wait, aren't you that girl who snuck into the kitchen before the ball started?" "Excuse you! I—" Charmaine got cut off by the King, "Explain yourself now or I'll put you all in the dungeon!" All three of their eyes widened and Lesley had no choice left so she explained "Okay! Okay! So, firstly we found out that Cinderella did not invite us to her birthday ball, and she has been excluding us since she went to live with the prince! We just wanted to spend time with you but you seem like you keep rejecting us! So we thought it would be fair if you got a

taste of your own medicine!” The prince responded, “Well look what you’ve done! You poisoned an innocent person who just came to celebrate somebody’s birthday, even if you wanted to poison anyone, it’s not right!” All three of them turned to look at Snow White’s face as pale as a sheet of white paper and felt guilty right away. “We’re sorry…” apologized Lesley, Charmaine, and Claudia. “Well, I’m sorry too… I mean it… I’m sorry for not inviting you guys to celebrate with me…” replied Cinderella guiltily. “We should learn to be a forgiving and loving family,” Lesley suggested. Cinderella replied, “I sincerely apologize for not inviting you all in the first place as well. I agree with stepmother, family members should not plot against each other.”

Since then, Cinderella, her stepmother, and stepsisters have learned to be loving and forgiving with each other and their other loved ones. There were no more poisonous apples, no more revenge, whatsoever. They became a tight family that was always caring, warm, and their affectionate bond remained just like that, forever.

Zoey's Elemental Power

Marymount Primary School, Wan, Ho Yee Ingrid – 9

Nobody really talked to Zoey before she became popular. Zoey was a shy and poor girl.

Her mother and father died in a car crash when she was little, so she was sent into an orphanage. She had no friends and was forced to work by the mean ladies who owned the orphanage that she resided in since she was little. She was taught to obey every single command and never complain. She didn't even remember who her parents were, but Mean Mary forbade her from going to their tombstones and Zoey was devastated. Every day, she would be sent errand after errand, but if she was late or not quick enough, Mean Mary would forbid her to have dinner. Each day, she lived in terror of Mean Mary and all the punishments.

It was the thirtieth of December that changed her life. It was a cold, snowy night and it was hailing. Although Zoey pleaded, Mean Mary still sent her to buy turkey for dinner. While Zoey was walking on the street, she accidentally tripped over something. She got up and checked what had made her fall over. It was light blue with two words on it, "Elemental Bubblegum." Zoey picked it up and saw that something was carved on it. "Warning! Special bubblegum, don't eat!" Although Zoey was aware of the warning, she was starving and couldn't resist eating it. On the first bite, Zoey felt a warm feeling from the tip of her head to her toes. She kept chewing it, and she tasted something different...

Suddenly, she remembered what she was supposed to do, and noticed it had stopped hailing. She ran as quick as she could to the store, but when she was going to pay, she noticed she didn't have any money. She was absolutely sure she'd brought it, but it wasn't in her pocket. Suddenly, a mini whirlwind came swirling, and it flew to the counter with some coins.

When she returned to the store and gave the turkey to the cook, Mean Mary scolded her. She said, "You stupid girl!" I was so hungry! You're such a bad girl! I wonder why I even took you in!" At that moment, Zoey felt like a fiery volcano. Again, something strange happened. The fire from the fireplace set fire to Mean Mary's woolly coat. Mean Mary jumped frantically, trying to put out the fire. She looked so silly that Zoey couldn't help but laughed at her. Once Mean Mary distinguished the fire, she turned to Zoey. "Oh, you are laughing now, are you! Well, get out! You're kicked out!" Zoey was so scared. She immediately ran out the door, sobbing. "Oh no! I've got nothing now. Where will I go now?!"

After panicking for a long time, Zoey decided to stay in a small park near the spot where she found the bubblegum. She searched through the bin and found an old, worn mattress. It was dirty but warm and soft, so Zoey took it and slept on it in the park. Strangely, when she woke up, she was in a totally different place. She was in a lush, green garden with one big red, green, blue and light purple giant fountain. In the garden, there was a mini waterfall and colorful flowers. But that wasn't the most amazing part. It was the mansion! The mansion had two floors, but the colors were just the same as the fountain but shinier. Zoey got up and was very curious about this place, so she started to explore. She went into the house and found a map then started to read. "Wow." Zoey thought as she was reading. "I wonder who lives here?" First, there was a gigantic living room with a TV, loudspeakers, a table, decorations and the most unusual of all.....cloud chairs! They were miraculously floating around. It was so fascinating that Zoey's jaw almost dropped to the ground. "What kind of house is this!" She wondered aloud. But this wasn't the only amazing thing. The bed was made of clouds with fire poles, water drapes and had ivy railing. All the things inside or outside was made from the four elements, water, fire, earth and air. She was very confused with whose mansion was it until she saw a letter with her name on it. She opened it, and gasped. It said, "Zoey, greetings. I'm Mira, your guardian. I've been guarding you ever since you were born into the world and have finally decided to show you your home. You have gotten elemental powers from the bubblegum your parents made for you when you were not yet born. It was your destiny to find and eat it. I'm a ghost, so I can't directly talk to you, or I'll evaporate, I will keep sending letters to you, though." "Y.....You knew my parents?" "Yes." The ghost scribbled almost immediately.

After recovering from her shock, she went out wearing not her old rags, but a set of new clothes she found inside a closet in the mansion. It was made of watery blue silk with wave patterns and fiery red lining. She also wore soft cloud shoes with flower crystals. She looked like royalty with her red hair with a streak of purple, green and blue. She set out to build a theater. She wanted to use her powers for a job to earn money. She couldn't always depend on her inheritance. Being a magician was always her dream when she was little, so she decided to try that. She used the money her parents left for her in their will to buy land and materials. First, she drew a draft of it. Then, she built the stadium with some hired help. Lastly, she bought all the things she needed in the theater.

Five months later, it was done! Many people were interested in magic shows, so business was great. After one year, everyone knew Zoey's name. She was famous for her tricks and magic. She also hired lots of people to help. She became a successful and popular girl, through determination and bravery. She is an inspiring example for everyone.

A Sinister Dish of Jealousy

Marymount Primary School, Yiu, Harriet – 10

It all started with a rainy day. Julius was halfway through cleaning the dusty basement. “Interesting, I don’t recall seeing this book before.” After flipping through a few pages, he remembered a dish that grandma used to make for him for lunch everyday. Even though grandma passed away, he still remembered how much he loved that dish. Julius went back upstairs and tried to recreate his favourite childhood dish. After trying multiple times, Julius finally succeeded in making “Sunday roast.”

A few weeks later, Julius decided to quit his job as a marketing associate to open a restaurant . Julius sold Sunday roast, full breakfast, fish and chips, toad in the hole, shepherd's pie for lunch and dinner. For dessert there were trifles, scones, apple pie, sticky toffee pudding and Victoria sponge cake.

Soon business was booming and Julius hired more and more chefs and waiters. Even though some chefs and waiters had a shady vibe. Julius didn’t care, as long as they had a 5 star resume, he would hire them. Julius became so lazy that he was always in his office watching television and spending money on the newest models of phones or cars and lots more, he soon forgot the quote from his mother that ‘money doesn’t grow on trees.’

Meanwhile in Liverpool, a girl named Ingrid was helping her grandma wash the clothes while her little sister Anne was playing with their dog Granola. “Anne Evans , come here this instant and hang up the clothes !” shouted Ingrid , “Five more minutes please!” begged Anne, “I said now, Anne.” Ingrid said in a stern tone. Anne got up reluctantly and started to hang up the clothes. “Anne, Ingrid dear, how about we eat at Julius’s Meals tonight?” suggested Gran. “Sure, Gran.” replied Ingrid. “Boring! I’m sick of eating at Julius Meals, why can’t we have McDonalds or Pizza Hut?” said Anne with an exasperated sigh. “Anne, we should be grateful that we have money to buy food and things that we need, most people don’t even have food on their table.” scolded gran. “Fine,” sulked Anne. After a delicious dinner of fish and chips, shepherd's pie and apple pie for dessert, they usually didn't have dessert but Gran noticed how sulky and fed up Anne looked and hoped to cheer her up with a treat. They walked back home after a filling meal to rest.

Julius woke up late in the morning as usual. He was so lazy and rich that he had an entire army of chefs, waiters and receptionists to run the restaurant without him needing to do anything, of course, he would pop in occasionally to welcome the food critics and other high ranking people.

“Is it time to strike yet, Boss?” asked in a gruff voice, which belonged to Mark, a chef who actually worked under cover for Josh, the boss of his own competitive restaurant as well as Julius’s brother. Josh read the newspaper and found out about his brother’s success and Josh’s recent lack of customers at his own restaurant because they all wanted to eat at the 5 star restaurant rated highly by food critics. Josh only had 4 stars and hated that Julius had become all high and mighty, so he thought of a way to kick Julius off his high horse. Josh hired a 5 star chef and paid him a bonus in his attempt to ruin Julius’s restaurant. The 5 star chef, Mark, readily agreed to the deal as he was greedy for money. Mark managed to get hired and work at Julius’s Meals. He purposely made the food less delicious than it usually was when the food critics came. However, they somehow always managed to get a 5 star rating even with Mark’s scheme.

“Bring it on!” replied Josh, so Mark started making the desserts too sweet and the food served would always be salty intentionally, and the locals would start to leave bad reviews. There used to be a sea of customers waiting in line, but due to the recent mishaps now the customers all went to other local restaurants, the restaurant was in ruins. Even the receptionist and half of the restaurant’s staff quit.

“Ingrid, where’s my parrot, Pocky? I hope you didn’t let Granola loose and that she ate Pocky,” yelled Anne “Don’t be so loud, Anne, Gran’s taking her afternoon nap. Anyways, Granola’s playing fetch with me now,” answered Ingrid. “It’s alright Anne, I was just reading the news. Funny enough, the newspaper states that Julius’s Meals are getting 2 star reviews and customers are leaving it due to its bad reputation.” “I think we should investigate this peculiar case, come into my study girls," said Gran.

After hours of scheming, they finally finished their detailed plan.

Meanwhile in Julius’s office, he auctioned his collection of vintage cars in an attempt to save his financial crisis as he was rapidly losing money. While he was auctioning off his prized collection, there was a commotion in the restaurant downstairs, Annie and Gran were distracting the other staff and the receptionist, while Ingrid stealthy slipped in the kitchen with her hidden camera and discovered that Mark was the one causing havoc to all the dishes. Food investigators were brought in and Josh’s restaurant had to be closed down. Josh and Mark will undergo interrogation and the decision whether he can re-open a restaurant again will remain at the hands of the public court.

New Tales of China's Inventions

Marymount Primary School, Yu, Sze Ching – 9

People in China always bring compasses with them when they are hiking. The compass is made to help people find which way is north, east, south and west and to prevent them from getting lost. It also has many tales for the compass, one, for example, is both a legend and a fairy tale.

It is said to believe that there was once a very wise old man who came up with lots of clever inventions. However, the man, who was very old, never had an accurate sense of direction, therefore, he always gets lost. One day, while the old man was hiking with his friends, he suddenly found himself alone, surrounded by trees, the trees seemed to tower over the man, covering up all the sunlight so that it seemed like it was in the middle of the night. With a sickening jolt, the old man realized that he was lost. The old man therefore tried to find a sense of direction. All of a sudden, the old man heard a panicked and strangled cry echoing through the forest. His heart rising with hope, the old man followed the sound, hoping it might lead him to his house or to a place he knew, hoping to go out of the forest, out of the dark and gloomy trees.

When the old man found the source of voice, he found a fairy tangled in a net, the fairy twisted and turned, caught in the net. While most people would ignore the fairy and go on, this old man had a huge and kind heart. In one swift move, the old man cut the ropes free. The fairy, who was grateful for this kind act, asked him how she can repay him, when the old man told the fairy about his troubles, the fairy transformed into a stick lying nearby. Then it spun as fast as the lighting, slowly decreasing its speed to point towards the north. Yes, this is the ancient version of the compass we use today. The old man then used the stick compass to go home. He thought with a surprising spirit: I will never be lost again, I must thank that fairy for all that it was worth!

Now, the compass is a more updated and detailed version of the stick compass, as it was said in the fairy tale. All of this happened because of a kind old man who had a generous heart kind enough to help people whenever possible. The fairy and the old man, even though they are not here at the moment, still lived inside us, their spirit encouraging us every step of the way to do greater things for greater good. Even though we can only do small things, we can also do it with great love. A kind and small move from every one of us may change the world and universe forever, not for glory and praise, but for the universe's and our own life's greater good.

The Compass with Love

Marymount Primary School, Yung, Pui Yan Bella – 11

In a world where technology was growing, there was a young scientist named Diana. Diana was the one who created the first ever AI robot and was about to introduce it to the world. The world has already developed multiple robots already, however Diana's robot could do anything, from answering their messages from friends and family to even going to interviews for them. Though that wasn't enough for Diana, she wanted AI robots to think and feel like humans. She wanted to create an image clone machine, a machine where humans could just programme an AI to communicate and interact in any relationship online. And so, the story begins.

Diana was making a few twerks to her image clone machine when suddenly, her phone rang and she groaned. "Alexa, answer the phone for me," she said impatiently. The phone stopped ringing and her mum's voice vaguely filtered through the phone. *Talking to people is such a bother*, Diana thought. Her AI and her mum's conversation sounded in the background as Diana concentrated on fixing her project on the computer. All of a sudden, Diana's vision became blurry and she collapsed onto her desk with a thud.

Diana woke with a gasp. *Wh-where am I?* She bolted up and frantically looked around. She was in an ancient Chinese room, with an antique wooden desk and chair sitting near a paper window. Diana stood up and slowly approached the ajar door. When she peeked through the door, she saw a man hunched over a table littered with pieces of paper and a bowl of water. This man was Zhu Yu, an astronomist in the Song dynasty, and later the inventor of the mariner's compass.

Diana started to withdraw, but the door creaked and Zhu Yu swiftly turned around with wide eyes. "Who's there?", he asked loudly. Diana sheepishly stepped into the room with her hands raised and he yelped. "What are you doing in my house?" Diana rushed to explain. She explained that she believed she had travelled back in time and Zhu Yu stared at her for a minute before nodding and scratching his beard. It was very easy to convince him since he himself is also a man of science. Diana looked confused but then shrugged. *Judging by all the papers he has scattered across the table, he may also be a scientist as well*, she thought.

After a while of living together in awkward silence, they slowly but surely started to bond over their love of science. They started to talk with each other, sharing concerns and theories, and Zhu Yu one day shared his reason about why he wanted to create his compass so desperately. He admitted that his father was the Port Superintendent of Merchant Shipping for [Guangzhou](#), and when his father went out to the sea like usual, he went missing and no trace of him was found. This was why Zhu Yu wanted to create an object which could lead people who were lost at sea back to their homes.

Diana felt sympathy for him and his father and offered to help him. Zhu Yu tearfully agreed and thanked Diana profoundly. They worked day and night tirelessly, and together, they finally finished the first ever compass created. Diana then realised with a jolt that she was taking the modern times for granted. The modern world already provided her with everything she needed to make new things. But the ancient times had no such technology, they only relied on pure physics, but still they could create such magnificent things that made such a big impact on the world.

She felt a deep respect building in her for the ancient times and especially for Zhu Yu. They looked at each other and clapped their hands with victory. After their moment of happiness passed, they finally claimed a long awaited good night's rest. The next day, with a hopeful heart, they set off to test it at sea. Diana set the compass on the ship's deck and stepped back. The little fish, which served as a needle, slowly pointed towards a direction and they both whooped with joy loudly. With grins on their faces, they finally let out a big breath of relief. Zhu Yu could finally find his father.

However, before they could get back to the shore, the sky suddenly turned black and thunder rolled across the sky. The waves became aggressive and a whirlpool opened its mouth to swallow them whole. Strangely enough, the

ship only tossed Diana overboard and Zhu Yu rushed towards her, a cry of alarm on his lips. But it was too late, and the whirlpool swallowed Diana whole.

Diana jolted awake and looked around in alarm. Then the alarm turned to confusion, then finally, sadness. She was back at her lab, still in front of her computer. She wondered if Zhu Yu found his father and she hoped, for both of their sakes, that the son and father reunited after a long time. She then thought of her own parents, and decided to call them back by herself. She learned that family was to be cherished from Zhu Yu and that alone was enough to thank him for it. Diana picked up her phone and dialled her mum with a nervous heart. "Hello? Diana?", her mum's voice rasped. Diana frowned worriedly at her mum's weak tone and voiced her concern. "Didn't I tell you already? I have a type of terminal illness. The doctors say that I only have a year left."

Diana realised that her mum must have told her when she called before, and a tear rolled down Diana's cheek, followed by many others. She sobbed before rubbing her eyes and took a deep breath. She knew she had to spend her time with her mum before her passing and thanked Zhu Yu for teaching her the reason for inventions, which is that inventions should foster stronger connections between people, bringing them closer together.

New Tales of China's Invention

Sacred Heart Canossian School, Cheng, Ingrid – 11

Captain Gordon looked at the dashboard. He was very reluctant to press the button with a big “S” printed on it. He knew that *Noah* would enter the “*Surfing mode*” if he did so.

He played the audio clip one more time and a voice with strong Chinese accent broke out, “... *Gordon, do you hear me? We found LHS-475-5-088! It is beautiful, I will send you the navigation coordinate when we have touched down ... Jesus, I can't believe we found it ...*”. The audio clip was sent from *Fuxi-9*, the last spacecraft launched by The People's Republic of China (“China”) before the mega wave of sunspot, also known as “*The Second Deluge*” hit the Earth. It was also the last, as the Solar System was gone since then.

Did *Fuxi-9* survive the touchdown? Captain Gordon had no idea. He personally believed that the spacecraft and its passengers were not so lucky, they should have gone missing for one reason or another, because no more messages were received and more importantly, the spacecraft was made by China. Yes, even *Noah* was made by China. He laid back and sank into his high-back chair, wondering why an American would fly a spacecraft entirely made by the Chinese, he found it hard to convince himself.

The answer was obvious – he had no choice. No country on earth knew how to build a passenger-carrying spacecraft of this size, or had adequate resources, except China. Even if his country could build its own spacecraft, they did not have time. Sunspot travelled fast, not to mention the need to find a planet that had air, water and was neither too hot nor too cold for mankind to live. China was their last hope, if they did not want to die. To everyone's surprise, China agreed to share technologies and send engineers. They even provided equipment and materials, for free.

Planet LHS was about 108,000 light years from the Earth. It was discovered by *Qian*, a Chinese scientist in 2047. The idea of wormhole-travel was first put forward by *Ren* of Huawei Group, the world's leading technology enterprise. At the time wormholes-travel was just a theory, which *Pengu-9* put into practice ten years later. According to *Yang*, a Huawei Prize winner, *Fuxi-9* could reach planet LHS in 13 years by hopping between wormholes, if they remained stable. But Yang also warned that wormholes were ‘alive’ and might not welcome strangers. Some people believed that wormholes would be transformed into black holes if agitated, pleased, or for no reason, God knows.

But *Fuxi-9* was built to make history. When its blueprint was first uncovered, the whole world was appalled. The American suspected that the technologies either came from a higher form of lives from the space, or stolen from them, though at the time they had ceased sending spacecraft to the space for decades. Putting aside *Pengu-9*'s capacity of carrying 16,000 passengers, most of them were kids, divided evenly by gender and proportionately by races, people were completely speechless when they saw the outer shell of the prototype. It was called *Nüwa-skin*, named after an ancient God of China, who saved the Earth trillion years ago. Not only the look of *Pengu-9* was cutting edge, *Nüwa-skin* was made from completely new materials, i.e. rare earth elements obtained from Neptune, Uranus, Mars and many other nearby planets. It was a hundred times stronger than steel and only one-hundredth of the weight of titanium. According to Huawei, *Nüwa-skin Fuxi-9* could pierce through the Sun and remained intact, but the spokesman did not mention what would happen to the passengers therein. The spacecraft was equipped with the latest 45G communication technology, with data transmission speed ten thousand times faster than light. Its nuclear energy system could keep the spacecraft travelling forever, in theory. In short, *Fuxi-9* was built to explore the universe and beyond.

Captain Gordon straightened his back and pulled himself together. He had been waiting patiently for too long, just to make sure that *Fuxi-9* survived the wormholes-surfing and found LHS. More than ten years had elapsed and now the kids had grown up. He knew that he had to make a decision now, or never. He got hold of the microphone and solemnly announced “*Afternoon passengers, I am Captain Gordon. It's time. Please go to your hibernation-capsules. We will surf at space-time 1800 hours sharp. May God be with you and your loved ones. See you all on planet LHS!*”. He put down the microphone and sank back to his chair, sighed in relief. Finally, he thought.

The journey was long and uneventful. He felt like navigating in a calm sea. The spacecraft was surrounded by white light. They travelled fast but could not feel anything, totally motionless. Some thirteen years later they came out from the wormholes. Captain Gordon saw a blue planet in front of him. Why would it be so like the Earth? He wondered. The spacecraft was moving closer and closer to the planet by autopilot. The touchdown was smooth. He

was once again overwhelmed by this China's invention, *Noah*. When he walked out from it, he saw Captain Yang, already waiting for him with a broad smile, "*How are you, Gordon? It was a rough journey, wasn't it?*"

Captain Yang explained everything to him. This planet was the Earth. They came back to the Solar System again through time-travel. Yes, wormholes-travel was time-travel, they just did not know at the time. Captain Yang had already sent his passengers to different continents and sank *Fuxi-9* somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean, which was later called "*The Bermuda Triangle*". But it was another story. He suggested Captain Gordon to follow suit. "*Gordon, we all know civilization is a double-edged sword and what modernization could bring to the Earth. We cannot let it happen this time. Let's start all over again and re-write human history.*". Captain Gordon nodded in agreement.

A Tree for Qing

Singapore International Hong Kong, Adams, Margaret – 10

Qing Ma-Yong silently floated through Li Yi street, pushing his hoverboard to go faster. He couldn't bear to look at the barren trees and smog – infested sky. Torn posters advertised the new breather. "Coming in May of 2503– the Co2 mask! Allows one to breathe through the poisonous air!" It read. Qing quietly choked down a sob.

When he got home, Qing looked at the book Mama had put in a glass case ages ago. It was a "textbook", from back when students didn't use iChips. The cover read Old Chinese words. Mama said it was an ancient science book his ancestors once used. It was inscribed with facts about the ecosystem and animals and wonderful miracles of things. Gently lifting the case, Qing took out the book and started reading. His technology-improved mind moved each page softly without damaging them.

"Huh," Qing muttered. He observed the little unmoving drawings. They were labeled too, with arrows pointing from the sky around it to the leaves on the tree. Then, Qing's iChips kicked in. He realized that the *diagram* was portraying a cycle. Suddenly, Qing's eyes brightened. He activated his translator and carefully read the tiny scribbles. He couldn't believe his eyes.

This miraculous tree was transforming gasses into pure, breathable air in an act called "photosynthesis"! Qing's finger shook as he traced the words. This sort of magic could turn China– and even perhaps all of Earth– into its old, beautiful state. But where would he find a seed to plant his tree?

The more he read the book, the more he learned about trees. It wasn't until many pages after his first discovery did he find out about how seeds were buried by animals, such as squirrels. He realized that if he dug deep enough underground, he would eventually find these seeds.

Without waiting any longer, Qing found himself a seed and planted it. A few days later, he was disappointed to see that the tree... had died. He tried not to be too upset and thought about what led to this situation.

"Poisonous air!" Qing shrieked. The tree thrived when it was in the dirt, with protection from the gasses above. When Qing planted the seed, he was too excited to come back to his senses. He could breathe the gasses because he was wearing a breather. The weak baby plant could not. However, Qing knew that once it grew tall and strong, it would work the magic it was meant to.

What should he do? Qing's mind fluttered off to a book about his hero, Li Shizhen. Li Shizhen was a famous Chinese herbalist, who spent his whole life planting medicinal herbs to help cure patients. Li Shizhen once used these massive see-through tents to plant his herbs. This prevented animals from eating his plants. What if Qing also used some sort of these plant houses to plant his tree.

Qing, now filled with new determination, found another seed underground and placed it in a new hole that was in a plant house that he built. Qing named it a greenhouse. His greenhouse's roof was very thin. It also had robots that measured and calculated the plants inside it. When the time came, the roof directly above the tree would fall and turn into a wall around it, allowing the tree to grow out of the green house, but keeping the rest of the plants safe.

A beautiful tree grew out of the greenhouse. After this success, Qing grew another and another tree. Soon enough, the skies in his local area cleared as the trees magically transformed gasses into air. Qing then traveled around the world, informing people about his invention.

Qing made headlines. "Young Chinese lad, Qing Ma-Yong, finds a way to re-purify air," read one. Qing did not care about fame though. Through the challenges he faced, he still was able to build a solution to the gasses in the air. He made history that year, when he turned Earth back to her usual, beautiful self.

Lu Ban's Saw

Singapore International Hong Kong, Du, Yizhi Edmund – 10

The Year 2273

Meet Bob. He's your friendly carpenter neighbor. Bob had created tons of flawless creations. He had collections of screws, chisels, utility knives, power drills, and most importantly, saws. Bob loved saws in every way. He had circular saws, chainsaws, miter saws, reciprocating saws, and more, but now, technology advanced fast, very fast, and carpenters who used saws were becoming an extinct species.

Lasers, machines, and advanced tools were becoming more and more common in modern society. Fewer people were hiring him to craft objects, and he slowly went bankrupt.

Now, you might pity Bob, who was just trying to survive in modern society, but he had a plan. Even though he was a carpenter, he was also a genius. Bob started crafting a strange phone booth-shaped machine. Soon, it was ready. Wooden buttons lay on the interior, painstaking gears turning beneath the glass floor, and an exquisite oak keyboard sat on a tall, slim table. It was the work of a genius. A time machine.

Bob planned to go back in time to prevent the invention of lasers, so saws would still be popular and in use. Bob cracked his knuckles and started typing codes to operate the machine. He was about to travel back in time. Suddenly, the ground shook mightily, shaking poor Bob up and down in the machine. The glass floor started cracking as the gears twisted madly. An earthquake.

The computer screen showed a line of words "473 BC". Bob cursed under his breath as he furiously tried to edit the lines of random coding, but it was too late. There was a brilliant flash of light, and he found himself in ancient China, in front of the renowned architect, carpenter, and structural engineer Lu Ban's house.

His time machine was badly damaged, and Bob was not in a good condition himself. Besides small scratches and cuts, he had a long wound that stretched from his elbow to the neck. Bob stared into the sky for a minute and fell onto the floor sobbing hysterically as he looked back on his life full of melancholy. As a child, he was disowned by his father and stepmother – his mother died giving birth to him, and he was left on the doorsteps of a local orphanage. As an adult, he was a poor lamb trying to survive in modern society.

The door in front of him creaked and a figure dressed in an adorned tunic stepped out and carried him into his house. When Bob calmed down, he calculated approximately what year 473 BC was. Bob's eyes widened. That was when Lu Ban invented the saw. He walked out of the room he was currently in and saw the man drinking tea while one-handedly crafting a magnificent creation, what was soon to be known as the saw.

Bob sat down on a spare seat and looked at the man's skillful hands, working like a machine, perhaps better. Bob decided to introduce himself considering how hospitable the gentleman had been. "Good afternoon, I am Bob Lu," he said politely.

"And I am Lu Ban," the man replied.

Bob's eyes widened. If this truly was Lu Ban, the inventor of saws, this would be a good way to solve his problems too.

"Lu Bob, huh? Same surname. What a coincidence." Lu Ban said.

Ignoring Lu Ban's previous comment, Bob started speaking, "Listen, if you are Lu Ban, then listen to my story and help me,"

Bob told his entire story to Lu Ban. Lu Ban listened carefully. Then he yawned.

"No matter how safe, efficient, precise, or intricate the saw is, your 'modern' society will never appreciate it with lasers and machines around, will they? They need to learn the significance of saws, not the disadvantages of lasers and machines. What I'm saying is that I can't help you. Go back to where you were and start raising awareness of the value of saws," Lu Ban replied.

"But..." Bob said, only to be interrupted abruptly by Lu Ban.

“I have already fixed that odd machine and you will go back to solve your problems like I always do.”

Bob nodded, obediently walked out of the main door, and stepped into the time machine, waving goodbye to his possible ancestor, Lu Ban.

When Bob traveled back to where he was originally, he immediately moved on with his plan. He walked to the center of the village and gave a speech about the importance of saws and how they contribute to society and culture.

After Bob gained some supporters, he started an awareness campaign on the significance of handmade productions with the help of his supporters, which ranged from intricate batik to detailed works of carpentry.

Around that time, there was a big case that supported what Bob was saying. A man had been in a laser surgery and because of a computer malfunction, the laser cut off his index finger. More people started appreciating modern chainsaw-carved wooden sculptures. With all this, people realized that no matter how great things made by machines are, handmade productions will always have people putting in tons of time and effort, sacrificing themselves, consuming their imagination and creativity. The results are all masterpieces that will never be replaced by any machine.

Following that, Bob had more and more people hiring him for carpentry. He soon became a well-known carpenter who created superb creations.

When Bob made a name for himself, he also began his second career as an activist who told stories about how he became a famous carpenter or about the significance of saws. The only thing he didn't tell was his travel back in time. He would forever hold his beloved memory within his heart.

The Year 2293

It had been twenty years since Bob's adventure through time, and he was flipping through a dusty scroll depicting his family tree. He looked back to one of the earliest ones and found out... Lu Ban was indeed his ancestor.

The Submission in Peril

Singapore International Hong Kong, Geoffrey, Zhou Amelia – 10

An ear-splitting bang. A blinding white flash. Under the curtain of blinding, slightly maddening white light the tendrils writhed and slithered, letting out one final, bloodcurdling scream.

The dust cleared.

Silence.

A cacophony of panic raged outside.

The emperor couldn't avoid it, nor push it away any longer. He had had months to spare, but all he had done was relax in the gardens and drink tea. Even after months... he could practically taste the irony. In a last-ditch attempt he ravaged his mind for ideas, but all hope was lost.

He sat in place, feeling helpless. The candles flicked ominously – the thick, milk-like wax melting like a block of butter in the sun. How much longer did they have until the beast strikes again?

Apparently, the attack was closer than he thought. His train of thought derailed as a strange vibration below his feet shook him violently. The entire town started to shake violently, wooden houses snapping and shuddering. Splinters flying everywhere.

“Wu!”

Eyes wide, he whirled around.. Was the voice really him? Or just a hallucination? There he was – Li Tian, frantically rushing over as if the giant spirit wasn't ever there. Somehow, his face was blazing with fragile hope. “W—we found it! Just in time!” As he grasped his friend's hand for what could be the last time, a faint warmth tingled from his chest and spread through his body like a wildfire. It was now or never.

As the desperate duo raced forward, the emperor shot a glance over his shoulder. A house hurtled towards. They both crashed to the ground, grazing a wayward brick. They glanced at each other knowingly, before breaking back into a run.

Although there were no candles, the room was filled with fiery light. Li rushed to the table, stumbling over bits of flaky powder. Panting, he held up... a bamboo stick? Hands shaking, he opened the hatch to reveal a mix of flaky black powder in the hollow tube. “Throw it in fire, and it will explode on contact. Come with me!”

“Where are we— b—but the monster! Are you out of your mind?”

“Plenty of fire.”

“Well...”

They sped to the village, hand in hand. Li rested his hand on the emperor's shoulder for what would be the last time. “My emperor... run. Far away.” and with these parting words, he struggled through the burning wreckage.

“No!...”

The emperor felt more hopeless than ever. All he could do was flee the scene, his sash flowing in the wind. He couldn't help the tears flying down his cheeks.

Crackles and bangs like claps of thunder. Fire peppering the air. If you could see past the curtain of fire, you could see the points of claws peeking out, and a split second later, purple particles littering the ground.

Only the gentle crackling of the ruins could be heard.

The city was free – but at what cost?

The Origin of The Four Inventions

Singapore International Hong Kong, Guo, Lingxi Miranda – 11

“All ready for story time?” Grandpa asked his two grandchildren, Qi Tian and Qi Lian, both of whom were nodding eagerly.

“My dear children, the story I shall tell you is a real adventure from thousands of years ago, in which a hero brought the four most important inventions of his day to human civilization: paper, gunpowder, the compass, and printing,” Grandpa told them.

“Qi Sheng was a hunter who was learning to lead his life in the dangerous forest: he constantly got lost in the misty woods or had to find the courage to fight ferocious wild beasts. One night when Qi Sheng camped out in the forest, he suddenly felt inspired to write down his adventures so that they could be passed down in folklore. He first tried to write a story on the sand with a stick, but with one gust of wind the writings were gone. The hunter then decided to write them down again on the bark of a huge banyan tree with his spear. It was arduous work and he realized that it would not be easy to bring the work home.”

“It was just then when Qi Sheng heard a growl not too far away. He traced the sound and found a fierce tiger chasing a fawn. Without thinking, Qi Sheng leapt forward and hurled his spear at the tiger. After a hard fight, the wounded tiger ran away. Blinking at the brave hunter, the beautiful fawn tiptoed around him and suddenly turned into a fairy! The fairy smiled at a startled Qi Sheng and said that she came from the Heavenly Palace,” Grandpa revealed.

“Grateful for the valiant act, the fairy asked Qi Sheng what she could do in return. The hunter blushed and waved his hands in modesty but could not help a few things jump to mind: the need to find direction in the misty forest, the wish to hunt larger predators and, most of all, the desire to write down stories of his adventures so that they could be passed down to his children and his children’s children. Seeing through the mumbling and hesitant Qi Sheng, the fairy smiled and whistled and all of a sudden a strong whirlwind surrounded them, so strong that Qi Sheng had to shut his eyes tight.”

“When Qi Sheng opened his eyes again, he found himself in a grandiose palace! There were hundreds of elves hauling materials in and out, the sound of whirring and buzzing machines filling the air. The fairy told Qi Sheng that they were at the Elves Mill of the Heavenly Palace where elves produced things for Heaven. She would show Qi Sheng around and he could pick up a few things which might be of use to him. Qi Sheng nodded with eagerness. At the first workstation the fairy brought him to, he saw elves sharpening black rocks into shapes of needles: some were placed on plates while some were made into statues which were then mounted onto carriages. The elf selected a black rock from the shelf and showed it to a baffled Qi Sheng, explaining to him that this was called a magnet which would show him North and South once it was turned into a direction finder they called a ‘compass’. The second station was a table laid with white, yellow and black minerals. Mixed together and ground by elves in a big pot, it finally finished as black powder. The elf picked up a pouch and told Qi Sheng that this was called ‘explosive’ which detonates when ignited, making it a most formidable weapon. At the third station, they walked over to a long machine where elves were mixing bark and wasted hemp together and pressed them into a flat piece to dry. The elf took down a dried piece and said that this was called ‘paper’, it was light, bright and made out of easy-to-get materials, so it could be used for drawing and marking, by scoring it with ink or stone. At the fourth station, Qi Sheng found himself watching elves carving one character on one of the many identical small woodblocks. Another elf picked up a few carved woodblocks and told Qi Sheng that this technique was called printing, where you pressed the blocks onto ink and then pressed them onto paper made from the third station, making it possible to reproduce many copies in a short span of time.”

“A loud bell rang in the Palace and the fairy hurried back to an amazed and excited Qi Sheng and informed him that it was time for the Jade Emperor to inspect the mill and it was best for him to go back to the Earthly World before getting caught by the Emperor’s guards. Before he knew it another whirlwind surrounded Qi Sheng and sent him back to the woods. When he opened his eyes again though, he found himself holding a compass, a pouch of explosive powder, sheets of paper and carved wooden blocks in his arms.”

“The next day, Qi Sheng went back to the forest. When he reached the deep part of the woods, a bear jumped out of the bushes and roared at Qi Sheng. With a grin, Qi Sheng steadily lit up the powder he had already prepared for the

beast. A huge explosion blasted in front of the bear, who yelped in agony before slumping lifelessly over, as still as a statue. That night, Qi Sheng arrived home with the biggest prey anyone in the village had ever hunted down, with the help of the compass of course.”

“What happened to the paper and the printing woodblocks?” the children asked.

Grandpa smiled and took down a book from the shelf. “The story I just told you”, he said, pointing to the book, “was written down and then printed right here by Qi Sheng, the greatest of my grandfathers, fifty generations ago.”

The Mythical Compass

Singapore International Hong Kong, Han, Zhiyu – 10

Waves gently washed over the soft golden sand. Seagulls flew in the sky. Spring breathed in the salty scent of the sea, enjoying the moment. It was the summer holidays and her family were in the Maldives. A whisper of wind brushed through the golden sand and something glinting caught her eye.

Spring walked closer, knelt, and touched it. Suddenly, a sense of power fuelled her body. She jerked back and cautiously approached the object again. She soon got used to the electrifying energy and lifted the object out of the sand. It looked like a square plate with a spoon attached to it. Spring ran her fingers on the sandpaper-like texture. It had patterns carved along the rim. She recognised it from a book in the Ancient Artefacts of China Museum. It was an ancient compass!

Spring flipped the plate over and saw words engraved in the stone: “Turn the spoon anti-clockwise, back in time you go. Turn the spoon clock-wise, future will come. In between travels, time stops.”

Spring was stunned. “Is this magic? I wonder what this does.” She flipped the compass around and spun the metal spoon anti-clockwise. Whoosh! Suddenly, Spring was swirled into a whirlwind of soothing, white dust.

“Whoa!” Spring yelped out, and as she opened her eyes, she saw trees and shrubbery, and a house in the distance. Her clothes also changed! It was a floral Chinese gown. “Where am I? Did I travel back in time?” Spring was amazed and in shock. Until someone tapped her on the shoulder.

“Ack!” Spring shouted. A boy jumped back in alarm and gave her a disgruntled look.

“Hey, calm down! I just wanted to ask if you were okay!” the boy said, frowning, “You just appeared out of nowhere! Who are you?” he had a teasing twinkle in his eyes.

“I am Spring. I just spun the spoon of a compass on a beach and here I am. Where is this place? Who are you?”

“I am Darren. Come with me! I need to bring you to Master Jing Bu,” Darren said, kindly.

Spring nodded and followed Darren into the house. The house was furnished with a plain wall and wooden furniture. It felt simple but cozy. Darren said, “Master Jing Bu likes it to be simple and peaceful. The great master is meditating. We need to wait outside and be silent. He will come out,” Darren whispered. He sat down on the floor and closed his eyes. Spring followed suit.

The door finally opened, and a silver-haired, tall and thin old man with a calm face walked out. “Master Jing Bu,” Darren bowed while greeting him. “Master Bu. I found this girl, Spring, in the garden. She said that she is from the future, and travelled back in time with a magical compass. Can we keep her as our guest tonight?” Darren asked.

Spring bowed as Master Bu looked at her.

“Oh?” Master Bu raised his eyebrows, “Darren, please get Ms.Spring ready for dinner. I would like to hear more about what happened.”

Later, Spring looked around in the dining room, and a painting caught her eye. “Wow! That looks like my mom! And that looks like the compass I found,” Spring breathed softly.

“That's my daughter,” Master Bu said, “You look like her too. What is your family name?” he asked.

“Bu,” Spring replied.

“Me too!” Grandpa Bu said. “You’re my very–great–granddaughter!”

In shock, Spring’s eyes widened, she was speechless and couldn’t believe that the compass not only brought her back in time to meet its inventor, her ancestor! “I can’t believe it.” she gasped: “but wait, where is my compass?” she suddenly realised that she hadn’t seen the compass. Spring couldn’t help but burst into tears.

“Be calm my dear.” Grandpa touched her head softly, “you said that your compass looked like the one in the painting. I only made two compasses. One for me, and one for my daughter. The compass you had and the compass for my daughter should be the same one! And you arrived at the time your compass already exists. The two same compasses cannot exist at the same time. So if you don’t have it, my daughter has it. You can visit my daughter and borrow the compass so you can travel back!”

“Then get ready. Tomorrow, we will leave for my daughter’s house!” Grandpa Bu announced.

The next day... Knock! Knock!

Rose opened the door. “Father! I wasn’t expecting you! Come in, let’s have some tea.” She showed them in and seated them around the bamboo table, with the aromatic smell of green tea warming everyone’s faces. “So, what brings you here?” Rose asked, nodding at Spring.

“Rose, this is Spring. She found your compass in the future and travelled back in time with it. She needs to borrow your compass to get back home” Grandpa Bu said.

“I see. I’ll take you there now.” She stood up and beckoned them over. They followed her into a small dark room with sunlight filtering through a small gap on a wall. On a small table in the centre of the room, the compass glowed brightly. Rose lifted the compass off its perch and handed it to Spring carefully. The familiar energy radiating off the compass charged through her body.

“Thank you Grandpa Bu and Rose! I will cherish this memory forever!” Spring smiled tearfully. Darren hugged her and waved goodbye.

“So long, my darling descendent!” Grandpa Bu smiled and hugged Spring. Then, she was surrounded by a cloud of cool, dense, white dust...

Spring splashed around in the clear water of the sea. It had already been five days since she had travelled back in time, but nothing seems to have changed since she disappeared from the beach. Time had stopped! She took a deep breath and felt it was a dream, although she knew everything was just real, and deep down she knew – Everyone needs a compass, to point them in the right direction.

The Theft

Singapore International Hong Kong, Lai, Tin Lap Christopher – 10

AD 1100, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Three hooded figures stood in a dark and mysterious forest clearing. One, wearing a black and crimson red robe, was giving what looked like a glowing ruby to the others.

“You must steal the plans,” he said. “We must change the course of history and win the war against the Chinese. We cannot allow them to rule over us anymore!”

The others, the ones with crude-looking knives strapped to their leather belts, understood, taking the ruby from the other figure. There was a flash of blinding red light from the ruby, and the men disappeared. As they left, a black name tag dropped onto the muddy ground.

It read “Chono”.

Which meant “wolf”.

AD 900, Wuhan, China

“Baba! Come and play *Jianzi* with me!”

A young girl, around eighteen, stepped out from behind a clump of bushes. When there was no response, she stepped into the building, not bothering to dry her muddy feet on the doormat.

“Baba?”

She knew her father was having a meeting with the other generals on making a new powerful weapon which would ensure victory in our war against the Mongolians., but he should have finished by now!

“ARGHHH!”

A bloodcurdling scream came from the basement. The girl slowly stepped down the cobblestone stairs, trepidation the only thing in her heart. She peeked into the basement, fearing the worst. When she saw what was inside, her heart almost stopped. Half a dozen lifeless bodies lay on the ground. She instantly ran to her father, kneeling next to him.

“Baba! No! Please don’t die!” she sobbed. “Who’s going to play chess with me?”

Her father used all his remaining energy to raise his arm and run his hand down the girl’s face, which was streaked with glistening tears. “You’re growing up so fast. Mei Hui, you must catch the thief and recover the plans.”

His eyes rolled back in his head and he slumped onto the ground, taking his last breath. The girl’s eyes were full of burning anger. She silently vowed that she would avenge her father’s death. Suddenly, the girl noticed a piece of paper out of the corner of her eye. She picked it up, trying to read the writing on it. But it was written in another language.

Mongolian. Their enemies. She could only read one word.

Chono.

The girl’s heart burned with unspeakable hatred for the person who had killed her father. *Her father*. She silently vowed that she would find the man who had stolen the plans and make her father proud. She picked up the slip of dirty paper and stood up, a lump forming in her throat. She took a deep breath to compose herself and then rushed out of the house.

WHOOSH

A hooded figure jumped from the roof of Mei Hui’s house onto the floor behind her with surprising ease.

Mei Hui froze, spinning around to face her enemy. He was holding a knife that looked as sharp as a razor, the blade glinting in the sunlight. The attacker had empty pitch black eyes. Suddenly, his eyes glowed emerald green, like some kind of monster from a fairy tale. Mei Hui screamed as loud as thunder, her fear growing.

“Don’t move!” said the man. It sounded cold. Emotionless. Like metal on metal. “Sun Mei Hui, if you move one step, I will kill you.”

Mei Hui’s face was pale and filled with dread. Her palms were clammy and her heart beat like a drum, threatening to burst out of her chest. She had read about people’s lives flashing before their eyes when they were about to die, but she never thought it would happen to her. [A memory came to her.](#)

AD 898 Wuhan, China

Mei Hui was sparring with her father, practising all the wushu forms that he had taught her. She was doing quite well, not letting any of her dad's attacks get through and launching good attacks of her own. Then, Mei Hui decided to go for a hard kick with her right foot to her dad's side. Her father dodged but fell off balance and stumbled. Mei Hui didn't waste this opportunity, punching at his gut. Suddenly, in one swift move, her dad caught her fist, swung her onto the mat, and put one foot on her chest triumphantly.

"This technique, 'The Dragon's Flail', has been passed down our family for generations. I know you will master it one day," Mei Hui's dad said. "And when you do, I'll be right beside you watching."

~~AD 900 Wuhan, China~~

The sound of a flashing blade startled Mei Hui back into reality. She used her heel and kicked the knife out of the man's hand. The man cried in pain and then growled, advancing towards Mei Hui. Uh oh. That was a bad idea. The man punched her in the nose, pain overwhelming everything else. The man cocked his fist to strike again but this time, Mei Hui was ready for it. She grabbed his fist and swung him onto the floor just like her father did to her two years ago, kicking him in the stomach. The man doubled over, groaning in agony. Mei Hui sobbed, remembering her father.

"Where are the plans?" Mei Hui cried. "You had better tell me or you'll get something much worse than this!"

"Fine! Chono has it. He will be at the North Gate, on the outskirts of the city. "

Mei Hui sprinted out of her home into the crowded city streets. Just when she was beginning to lose hope, Mei Hui made out the silhouette of a tall man atop the ramparts of the North Gate.

"Chono!" Mei Hui shouted. She ran as fast as an arrow towards the man, diving towards him. But then, there was a blinding flash of light, and the man disappeared. Just then, one of the plans fluttered to the ground. It was a formula. To make gunpowder.

But Chono was gone, taking the rest of the plans with him.

Gone.

The Rocket

Singapore International Hong Kong, Larard, Charles – 11

500 years before the Shenzhou and Chang e rockets

*The bird lies, scarred and harmed,
It slams itself on the heavy metal cage,
Desperately wanting to take flight.
It sings,
Yet it is not a harmless carol,
It is a prayer, a plea, to god.*

Wan Hu checked his poem one last time for any gaffes. Chuffed to not find any, he put the poem aside.

He had spent the vast majority of his life dreaming and envisioning to one day escape the cage-like realm he's been living in and feel free

28 years previously

It had been a beautiful, clement afternoon, and seven year-old Wan Hu had just finished his lunch before kissing his mother goodbye, and striding off with his friends to the prairie to play with their kite. It had started off uneventfully, as there was unequivocally no wind at all. They tried to throw it in the air, but it simply got stuck in a tree. They tried to retrieve it but the tree was just too arduous to climb, and so, the other boys walked off.

Wan Hu didn't.

He climbed and fell, again and again and again. Bruised and cut, it took poor little Wan Hu five hours to retrieve the kite. High up in the tree, where the kite was stuck, he had the perfect vista of the moon. Wan Hu nearly fell out of the tree in astonishment. As it was getting late, the sun dipped below the horizon, and the moon became clearly visible. It was perfectly round and beautiful, like a shy little girl who came out only at night. Wan Hu foolishly reached for the moon, forgetting that it was 384,401 kilometres away. Chagrined at not being able to touch it, little Wan Hu slowly climbed down the tree to bathe in the moon's rays.

I must become an inventor, he thought. I must invent something that can fly me to the moon.

500 years before the Shenzhou and Chang e rockets

Wan Hu stared dreamily into the sky, thinking about the incident that had occurred 28 years ago. As a child, he had been talked out of being an inventor, and had become a carpenter and then poet in lieu.

That was 28 years ago, however.

He had been following his brain, and now he wanted to follow his heart.

He had every right to become an inventor and nobody, not even the Emperor of China could stop him.

Wan Hu knew that to get to the moon, he would need something to push him up, and there had been nothing, *nothing* in ancient China of this sort.

So he would need to do it unchaperoned.

It was not as unambiguous as going to a store and buying a jet pack, or hopping on the *Discovery* or the *Enterprise* or the *Saturn V* (although that may not be so simple). Wan Hu definitely had the brains and the genius, but he had no experience nor the technology to build such an item, and, most importantly, no team to help him. He knew it was risky, stupid, extremely dangerous, but Wan Hu had waited for 28 years.

That was long enough to drive a man crazy.
He started planning. Unfortunately, he got nowhere, and to refresh his brain, he walked out to the lantern party in the village.

The sight in front of him dumbfounded Wan Hu.

The villagers ignited the bottom of each lantern and they slowly rose up, disappearing high in the sky, possibly *reaching the moon*. The lanterns were whitish–yellow, each about the size of a human being.

That's it, he thought, I can use fire

At the speed of light, Wan Hu sped back to his house. He filled 47 cylindrical tubes with gunpowder, (which had just been invented by ancient Chinese alchemists) thinking that it would make him go faster. Poor Wan Hu didn't realise that when fire reached gunpowder, it would blow him up, and that this blood–curdling invention would be used by people for generations to come. Then, he attached ropes onto the top of the tubes, where the gunpowder was, and fixed all 47 of them to a chair. Afterwards, he got his servants to lift the chair, and bring it out onto the lawn. Finally, he brought out the old kite that had been stuck in the tree many faithful years ago and held tightly onto it.

When I get back, I will call it a rocket, Wan Hu thought. Of course, he didn't know that he wouldn't come back. Wan Hu looked up at the moon, and a thread of doubt crossed his mind.

What if I don't make it to the moon? But determination overcame him, like a tsunami over an ant, and he bravely walked up to the chair.

He signalled for his servants to ignite the rockets.

Nothing happened.

Then, suddenly, he took off, and the rocket raised a few metres off the ground.

That was it though.

The fuses were still burning though, and the fire reached the gunpowder.

Kaboom.

Wan Hu would never know that hundreds of years later, the Chinese adapted his invention and turned it into the *Chang e 3, 4, and 5*, which were unmanned spaceships which went to the moon, or the *Shenzhou* series, which carried a team of three to space.

It is good to pursue your dreams, but you *cannot* let your dreams overtake you. A good man follows his heart, but a wise man follows his heart *and* brain.

The Mysterious Powder

Singapore International Hong Kong, Le, Xinyu Natalie – 10

His old face wrinkled. Clearing his throat, he sat down deliberately. The heads bowed while peering with somber eyes, quivering in their wakes. Emperor Wu broke the silence.

“This is an ORDER! For such a dignified Man, My looks fail to impress others. It doesn’t suit Me in ANY way,” Emperor Wu tutted to his subjects. Everyone held their breath until the next word escaped his lips. Their racing heartbeats reverberated through the palace. “Find Me an elixir that can fulfill My wish of eternal youth and beau—”

Out of nowhere, a heave of breath sounded. Spinning around in confusion, all the soldiers’ attention landed on the freckle-faced man; Chu. His face puffed out, he yearned to stop his thunderous sneeze. "A-achoo!"

Utterly disgusted, Emperor Wu scoffed, “Well, Chu. I am sure that a great mind like yours has already thought of an excellent idea. Share it with us.”

A wildly petrified expression crossed Chu’s face. “Uh... I have decided to venture into the mines in the north!”

Everyone gasped. They all knew the undiscovered mines in the north were desolate, dangerous and reserved for the most impressive soldier: Bao.

“Amazing. I will expect a discovery in... two weeks,” sneered Emperor Wu.

The news spread like wildfire. The treasure could be found anywhere; all possibilities were open as far as the vast sea.

Far to the north, Chu shot awake. He scanned his surroundings which was only visible by the minimal amount of light for his oil lamp. It was leaning against the dirt wall as if it was on holiday. Chu kicked it vigorously. Was it days ago when he had enjoyed basking in the sun?

Plunging the shovel in the dirt, he heaved it up, and threw the dirt-debris into the small dirt mountain. His calloused hands tore open. Blood oozed out. Each strike he took left a scar that reminded him of the days he’d been in the mine. Staring at his injury, Chu’s blood boiled. He tried to take his anger out by slamming the shovel on the ground. Why had he spluttered such a preposterous answer that couldn’t even be feasible? Life was just unfair.

Incessant sweat trickled down Chu’s face like a waterfall. Beside him, the shovel was stuck head first in the earth, slightly slanted. Adjusting the oil lamp so that the light shone at the shovel, he tried to yank it out.

It wouldn't budge.

He grabbed the handle, leaned back and yanked the shovel with all his might to force it out. A cloud of dirt rose up like a ghost and made him topple over, inhaling a nose full of dust. An irresistible wave of itchiness possessed his nose. A sniff. Then a contorted face.

ACHOO!

He grudgingly stood up from that big blow. He could smell the moist stuffy air, blended with tinges of charcoal and sulfur. Charcoal? He whipped around, anticipating the unknown material in front of his eyes. Nothing. Just compacted dust. Then, his ears shot awake; a low rumbling engulfed him. Then, a high-pitched shriek sounded from above. Panicking, he started spinning on the spot, thrashing at his invisible enemy. There was no flash of hope now. The abyss was a gray monster glaring menacingly at Chu, eager to swallow him in one.

As if the gray monster had understood his mournful thoughts, it dissipated a little. Light flooded in the miniscule gaps of dust, allowing Chu to unclench his nerve-racked heart. He glanced in all directions, finding the person who had squealed in pain.

“Who shrieked?” hesitated Chu.

“Me, Bao, Emperor Wu’s most dedicated soldier!” roared a pretentious voice.

Chu’s eyebrows lifted. He shouted, “Bao? It’s me! Did I just send sparks of flames up? I am alone down here, just with my oil lamp and shovel for company!”

“Chu? Wow! Did you know that you burnt a hole in my pants with that blast of flame? I was just mourning the difficulties of life, and... KA-BOOM!” jittered Bao, as if those words had been trapped in his guts for eons. “Then, parts of my skin wasn’t red!” He was teased as the “Red Panda”, because of his florid skin covered with acne.

“Don’t move. I’m going to send another jet of sparks up, but don’t avoid it,” ordered Chu, his heart beating like an over-hyper drum. He resumed banging with his oil lamp glinting not far away, his head bursting with excitement.

KABOOM!

It was followed by another howl of pain.

“Is your skin red?!” stammered Chu, on pins and needles.

“Holy cow! It isn’t! A patch of perfectly smooth skin!” squealed Bao, astonished.

Chu’s palm was sweating heaps. Could this...

It seemed days ago since that monumental spark of flame burned Bao’s pants. They were now standing stock-still in front of Emperor Wu. He held the small bottle of powder up to the light and observed it meticulously. Emperor Wu raised an uncertain eyebrow, as he doubted the powder.

“Is this a product of fire that burnt charcoal and sulfur?” questioned Emperor Wu, his sharp gaze staring directly at Chu.

“Yes, your Majesty. We pre-burnt the powder mixture so You won’t feel any form of pain,” He said assertively.

“Very well. I shall try it, and decide whether this powder is worth praising,” declared Emperor Wu, plucking the lid off. Pouring out some of the sandy content, he rubbed it on his palm. It felt like hours until the contents were absorbed into his skin.

Nothing happened.

As he was about to blow his top, something miraculous happened. The prune-like skin softened, revealing a patch of smooth, unscathed skin. Transfixed, Emperor Wu watched its progression.

Bao stuttered, “Does this help, my Majesty?”

Emperor Wu embraced them, grinning from ear to ear, “Astounding! Within one and a half weeks, you have rid of all my worries that had been in the pit of my stomach for years. You will be greatly rewarded for this invention, and your names will go down in history.”

The Lost Invention

Singapore International Hong Kong, Lee, Jian Si Sophie – 10

It was a snowy day at Bei Long International School. Keira looked through the window, intensely bored. She tuned out everything Ms. Chen said until she heard: “... a class field trip tomorrow!”

Ms. Chen’s words caused a ruckus. There were groans of dejectedness, gleeful whoops of happiness, and some students simply sat there, waiting for everything to pass.

“Everyone calm down!” Ms. Chen raised her voice, “You haven’t heard where we are going!”

This only made the class more energetic. Jiaming shouted, “Where?!”

Ms. Chen knew there was no hope of being heard above the noise. She waited silently before announcing, “We are going to Beigao mountain!” The chatter resumed, but silence soon rolled over the class.

The next day, the class boarded a bus heading north. Keira sat with Michael and Sylvie, since she had few friends. Even then, she felt like a lone wolf. As Keira joined them, Michael and Sylvie momentarily stopped talking before resuming, ignoring Keira’s presence.

They arrived after ninety long minutes. Ms. Chen clapped to get their attention, “Everyone calm down. Split into groups of four and I will assign a teacher for each group.”

After much arguing, Keira found herself in a group with Michael, Sylvie, and Jiaming.

Ms. Chen announced through a loudhailer, “Alright. I want Ms. Analyla with Finn, Dawei, Lihua and Mei. Mr Shum with ...”

Ms. Chen’s voice was drowned out in Keira’s mind. Keira always seemed to block out the boring parts, only listening to the bits that concerned her. She hummed her own tune, her safe space when tuning out, allowing her mind to drift.

“–Mrs. Verona with Travis, Jun, Xiaofang and Tilly. Keira, Michael, Sylvie and Jiaming, you’re with me. Come,” Ms. Chen beckoned to them.

They walked west for a short while, exploring the woodlands, looking for interesting rocks to collect. Suddenly, the earth started rumbling, clawing at the roots of nearby trees. It shook so hard. A hole opened up, off to their left, right underneath their shovels. The shovels disappeared into the ground for a second, then were pushed out, as though the earth was alive and wanted something in particular. The group backed hesitantly into a small clearing, and the earth fell beneath their feet. They expected to be thrown out, but they weren’t. They must have been what the earthquake was looking for.

“Everyone, calm down!” Ms. Chen shouted. Unsurprisingly, no one listened. A thought crossed Keira’s mind, why did Ms. Chen always tell them to calm down? Did she making it into the Guinness Book of Records for the most number of times a statement was repeated?

Keira shook her head and, remembering something she read, said, “We have to make a fire and find a way out!”

To her surprise, everyone listened. Keira paired up with Sylvie, leaving Michael with Jiaming. They ventured into the semi–darkness. Sylvie and Keira brought back some dried leaves to Ms Chen while Michael and Jiaming found some old logs of firewood.

Despite great effort, Ms Chen failed to start a fire. Sylvie softly stepped forward, grabbed two branches and began rubbing them together vigorously. She started a small fire and placed it on the logs and leaves, saying, "There."

Keira looked around. Something looked off, a glint of light not coming from the fire. She crept away and towards the light. Finding an ancient door, she called to her group, "Guys! Come and see!"

They walked to her and looked at the door. Michael suggested, "Let's open it up and have a look?"

"Sure," Ms. Chen agreed. They carried out Michael's plan and got inside, placing heavy stones to hold the door open.

"Wow," Keira murmured in awe. The cavern was massive, bigger than her apartment! In the centre Keira saw a strange gadget. She was confused why such a big cavern would be dedicated to it. Looking closer, she saw a marvellously eye-catching traditional Chinese hat. It had a crown on its side, with a pair of glasses and a sort of projection lens.

Keira grabbed the dusty contraption and placed it on her head. It did nothing. But inscribed on its side were the words "To those who require help, you will find this useful" in Chinese. She went outside, ignoring the contrary cries behind her. She put the contraption on and looked around. A secret hatch was outlined in gold, glowing brightly right in front of her. She took it off and the vision vanished. Having told the others what she saw, Keira led the group to the hatch.

"What should we do next?" Jiaming asked. As they tried to come up with something, Keira took the contraption off and placed it on the hatch. Light filled the room and the contraption flew back to her hand. Suddenly, they all started floating up, and were teleported to the bus.

"We were ... waiting ...huh?" All the teachers and students chorused together as the group drifted down from midair. "Everyone calm down!" said Ms Chen as she led the group onto the bus, with Keira holding onto the contraption, everyone was silent as a mouse.

Once they got back to school, the group dashed up the stairs to the Science Department to get some answers. The Science Head Teacher, Ms Ong, asked for some time to study the object. An hour of frustrated pacing later, Ms Ong came back, shaking her head, "Our team cannot identify it. Let me refer you to my friend at the Department of Ancient Artifacts of China."

A few days later, the response arrived. The Department believed the object was actually a teleportation device that appeared to be at least two thousand years old, and the first of its kind to be discovered, possibly a lost ancient invention. However, they were still locating the cavern. The Department would continue with the investigation, and invited the group to join them in summer to study this newly-discovered national treasure.

Tales Engraved in Lodestones

Singapore International Hong Kong, Leung, Tze Chun Quentin – 11

The *China Daily's* headline read: "Ominous storm clouds overcast *only* above Mt. Huashan."

As a renowned meteorologist at the *Xi'an Environmental Research Institute* – at least I'd like to think I was – storm clouds covering mountains weren't something unusual. Determined to discover why storm clouds were there but not elsewhere in *Xi'an*, I decided to experience Mount Huashan firsthand.

Gazing at the serrated landscapes near Mount Huashan, coils of mist lingered in the air as jagged rocks pierced through the surface. Suddenly, I heard a faint hum resonating through the air. My eyes darted towards the summit, searching for the source of that eerie sound.

Continuing my ascent along the winding path, I felt a subtle twitch in my pocket. I furrowed my brow, soon realising it was my keys that were seemingly luring me towards somewhere familiar yet distant. Disoriented, I rummaged through my bag for my phone to access my online compass in a bid to reach the right path.

The sky darkened abruptly. Contorted lightning tore through the sky like a shredded veil, one errant bolt striking a phantom-black stone. With curiosity overwhelming me, I touched its icy surface, picked it up, and placed it in my bag. I gasped as the compass's needle displayed on my phone spinning rapidly before my eyes.

Then everything turned black.

My eyes sprung open in shock, soon adjusting to my unfamiliar surroundings. I glanced around, only to find several ancient cottages with ceramic roof tiles and overhanging eaves.

I then felt the presence of an elder beside me, staring into the distance. Mumbling to himself, he stroked his lustrous beard while holding a square plate with a spoon-like object on top. The elder was dressed in a silky robe with a sash cinched across his waist. He glanced around, as if figuring something out. Thoughts raced through my mind like a storm. How curious!

I lay on the ground, wondering about my next move. "Erm... e-excuse m-me, sir," I stuttered nervously, feeling confused. "D-do you know where we are?"

The elder slowly turned around, his piercing eyes boring into me. "This is southwest of *Chang'an*."

My eyes widened in disbelief, struggling to apprehend what I was hearing. "*Chang'an*? Wait... isn't that a city from 206BC?"

The elderly sighed. "*Chang'an* is currently our primary capital. I am Zhong-Ming – a scholar."

My throat tightened, as a dreadful realisation dawned on me. Zhong-Ming's words echoed in my mind, as thoughts of the Han Dynasty emerged. *Could I have gone back in time?* I thought incredulously. *What happened?*

Zhong-Ming stared at the square plate, glints of disappointment in his eyes. "I failed to find a suitable location for the emperor's Weiyang Palace." His fingers traced the outline of the device he was holding. "This

south-pointing spoon that I had designed was supposed to bring prosperity and harmony to our city by aligning the fundamental rules of geomancy.

“However, the spoon is damaged. Now it is too late. The emperor has fallen ill.” Zhong-Ming looked away, a despairing shadow cast beneath him. I walked forward to study his ‘south-pointing spoon’. Unexpectedly, the spoon started spinning frantically.

“Step back!” Zhong-Ming ordered, staring at my bag. “What are you carrying?”

I searched my bag, only to see the rock I had picked up on Mount Huashan. I held it up for Zhong-Ming, who then gasped. “A lodestone...”

As his eyes lit up, Zhong-Ming said, “This is it!” He added confidently, “Come to my workshop. We might have a chance to save the emperor.”

We reached a bustling cottage brimming with tools, maps, and diagrams. Zhong-Ming then pleaded, “Please, for the sake of the emperor, lend me your lodestone.”

I placed the ‘lodestone’ on the wooden desk, watching patiently as Zhong-Ming carved the coarse stone into a polished spoon-like shape. He placed the tip of the spoon onto the centre ring of the plate, and it gradually tilted to one side.

Zhong-Ming examined the intricate carvings on the plate, smiling appreciably. “Yes,” he proclaimed. “We must meet the emperor now and inform him about our findings.”

Leading me towards Weiyang Palace, where the emperor now rested, Zhong-Ming grasped onto his improved south-pointing spoon, overcome by nervousness and excitement. Despite his complicated feelings, a whirlwind of exhilaration flooded through me. Having the chance to meet the Han Dynasty’s emperor, my worry of returning was left behind, and I was now immersed deeply in history.

“Zhong-Ming?” one of the guards hollered. “What are you doing here?”

“Please!” Zhong-Ming sank to his knees. “I have something important to tell the emperor!”

Out of the corner of my eye, I caught a glimpse of the emperor, dressed elaborately in embroidered robes, his servants accompanying him as he walked outside.

“Hear Zhong-Ming out!” I insisted.

Kneeling respectfully before the emperor, Zhong-Ming explained, “With the help of my new friend, I managed to fix the south-pointing spoon. It showed me the most *prosperous* arrangement for your palace.”

“How do you know?” the emperor answered in a raspy whisper.

“My friend provided me with a lodestone to replace the broken spoon on this instrument.” Zhong-Ming presented his invention. “However, you do not need to relocate Weiyang Palace; only the entrance should be moved to the east side of the Yangtze River.

To Zhong-Ming’s surprise, the emperor declared, “Begin the construction of Weiyang Palace’s new entrance.”

The emperor shifted his gaze towards me. “Thank you for your assistance. As a reward, you may keep this south-pointing spoon.”

My heart raced as I received the south-pointing spoon with trembling hands. Before I could express my gratitude, gushes of wind lashed about, as a bolt of lightning struck before my eyes.

Everything went black.

I found myself back on Mount Huashan, gazing upon the rustling foliage above me, wondering what had truly happened. My doubts dissipated as the familiar south-pointing spoon rested beside me. Now that it had been repaired, Mount Huashan was once again laced with lodestar-blue skies and angel-white clouds.

I, too, smiled appreciably.

The Sky of Stars

Singapore International Hong Kong, Levenishti, Arion – 10

It was pitch black and dead calm. The wind was howling, and the cold wrapped its arms around a tiny, miniscule hut. In that hut near the sea of mountains there lived a young, gifted boy named Liu. He possessed a hunger for knowledge and a thirst for discovery. Liu was more of an outdoor child. His parents didn't see him because they worked hard day to night cleaning houses and barely even had time for him.

One normal day, Liu did what he always did. In the spirit of discovery, he was set abuzz with excitement to go out on a journey, but of course, after he had finished all of his schoolwork. But today would be different. One of the greatest inventions of all time was about to take shape, and little did Liu know that China, and soon, the whole world would know how famous he would be. After Liu finished all of his homework, he ran off with a smile on his face to go on a brand new adventure. As he walked, he noticed many trees, plants, and birds all in one area. Liu thought to himself, what if there is something special, like a rare creature, or a spectacular view of nature on top of a rock? But whatever it was, since Liu's whole personality was to discover new things, he had to know what was in there.

And Liu ran as fast as a speeding train to get there. When he entered the pure greenery, he noticed that on the outside, this area looked lovely, but on the inside, it looked dark. Now, he was convinced that something was hiding within the depths of this "Darkness". Liu liked to call it even though it wasn't that dark. But Liu wasn't about to turn back just yet. He would stop at nothing to find out what mystery was in that darkness. Sunrise to sunset, the next day, or the next next day, or the day after that, but in the end, Liu knew that whatever treasure or mystery was hidden in that darkness, had no chance of hiding from him. He would even skip school till the point where he searched every single space in that darkness. That's how determined he was.

Liu walked slowly, observing everything around him. But while he was walking deeper and deeper into the darkness, it started getting dark. But while he was walking and he looked at a weird-shaped rock, he accidentally bumped into something tall and strong. In his mind, Liu thought that maybe there was a monster in there, and it could have been a trap for children who loved to explore like him. His heart became a drum. He just wanted to closely investigate a rock. But this was the end. Liu looked up and was shocked to see what he bumped into. It was a tall and huge bamboo. Liu thought that the last thing he would see here was bamboo. But he could see the end of the darkness. He turned back and quickly realized that there was a circle of bamboo surrounding the middle of the darkness. One part of Liu's mind thought that it was a coincidence, one part thought that this was a trap, and another part thought that there would be treasure inside. But Liu remembered why he was here: to discover something new. So Liu decided to look inside, even if it was a trap.

He walked around the circle of bamboo and found the entrance. He walked as slow as a glacier, looking back and forth, making sure that nothing or no one was trying to sneak up on him. But while he was walking, he saw something weird. It was saltpeter, a substance which caused insane reactions. But after only a minute of walking, it started to get darker than a starless sky. He was getting a little bit frightened when he noticed that he was going down. Liu walked for another twenty seconds and he saw something small, orange, and bright. It was a lantern. He took the lantern and now he could see much better and clearly.

It was good that Liu had a lantern, but what he didn't have was the knowledge of what was in the darkness. Just then, he realised that it was already night and that he hadn't looked at the sky for at least four hours. He also realised that the biggest star he had ever seen was directly above him. It twinkled like diamonds, casting a magical glow. Liu wanted to create something that would capture the essence of stars.

Driven by his passion, he went back to his hut, and brainstormed how he was going to make this invention. But when he arrived at his hut, he noticed that he had many various materials found in nature, plus gunpowder, collected from his various journeys. He took the saltpeter he had and added it to his sulfur and charcoal and many other things that magically appeared on his table. Liu mixed all the ingredients equally and he formed the shape of a cylinder with a cone on top with a magical element inside. He still had the lantern he found in the darkness and held his breath as

he lit his creation. A moment later, a delightful explosion filled the room. There were dancing, shimmering and dazzling sparks that showered the room. Liu felt like a mad scientist. He was amazed to the maximum and his mind had exploded. In his mind, Liu could picture the whole world being joyful and using his invention. He would never be forgotten. In the end, Liu decided to call his invention "Fireworks."

And he was right. Hundreds and thousands of years after this day, millions of people still use his invention as a symbol of joy and celebration. It will go down in history for the rest of eternity.

The Unknown Story of the Invention of Paper

Singapore International Hong Kong, Li, David – 11

On a bright day during the Han Dynasty, a man named Cai Lun took a stroll in forest after a tiring day of writing documents for his emperor. There was a diverse array of trees and flowers. The scent of flowers evoked his memory of his emperor's glamorous garden. Birds' chirps filled the fresh air. As he stepped on some dried bark and leaves, a thought popped into his mind, like a candle lamp lighting up. He thought, "When I was young, I had to carry a tremendous volume of books in a cart. I attached it to my horse every day. My horse had become weak and frail. What should I do to solve this problem? Oh, maybe I can invent some exotic writing materials with bark and grass!"

He then collected some bark and grass. He was surprised that they were rife with mites. Some mites bit him. A repulsive feeling went from head to toe. The venom created lateral transductions inside of his bloodstream. This created lumps on his skin, making him jump over the place while he was scratching them. But every cloud has a silver lining. While in a state of panic, he suddenly clenched his fists and squeezed the bark and grass. Some golden sap came out of it. Instinctually, he put some sap into a Chinese wine cup. Immediately, he measured the sample's stickiness and thickness. "Yay! I think this fits the bill! This is the best bark and grass in the world! This will bring me to another step of my invention. Hooray!", exclaimed Cai Lun. Jumping up and down, a feeling of elation surged through his body.

He then rushed to his warehouse and grabbed a hammer. He hurled his hammer back and forth onto the desiccated grass and bark, flattening them as he tried to control his contraption. The color of the material transformed from brown to white. Suddenly, he felt some rumbling noises beneath his feet. The floor crumbled. He didn't even have time to discern what happened. This caused him to jolt forward and catch the falling mixture with his wooden hammer! The damage was terrible, but due to Cai Lun's liberal-minded attitude, he continued his project in the fields. He continued his work, for many hours, until finally, the mixture had a perfect texture, and was ready for the next step.

He then chose a hand saw and created incisions inside of the fiber mixture. He thought that this process would enhance the melting process. He molded the cut-up pulp in a container. To compress it, he stepped on the mixture. His feet got stuck inside. This protracted the time taken for the treading process. Afterwards, he attached a stick to the container. He submerged the container into a pool of boiling water. But then, disaster struck. The container got ensnared at the bottom. Then, two red eyes came glowing out of the pool, and a loud houl came rushing through his ear. "Muhaha, this is your demise Cai Lun, who told you to collect the bark and leaves? This is all your fault!", exclaimed a devil in that pool. The force from this spectral figure attempted to drag him into the water. They were literally playing Tug-of-War. He almost went over the rim. His arms were waving in the air like he was stranded on a desert island. At the eleventh hour, his feet became stable. A moment later, something floated up from the depths, which was that container. This indicated to him that his effort was not fruitless. Burns developed on his hand when he nearly got stuck in that pool, due to droplets of water falling on his skin.

Cai Lun opened the container and found that it was steaming hot. He then named the milky mixture "pulp". He poured the pulp into the bathtub, making a beautiful waterfall. However, this process was slightly lamentable to him. Cai Lun underestimated the dangers of liquids. He spilled a bit of the pulp, causing him to fall into the bathtub. It was a difficult task to get out of there. Glubbing noises were coming from his mouth. Bubbles were being produced in the pulp. After all that drama, all of his energy had disappeared, leaving his semi-conscious body blobbing up and down. Out of the blue, his eyes opened, startled to find out he was inside of his own invention! He reckoned that he had not learned enough about how liquids work on this planet. Cai Lun kept splashing and flailing in the pulp. Eventually, his hands grabbed onto the edge of the bathtub. After he got out of the tub, he was drenched with pulp like a snowman. But there was a miracle. Unintentionally, his struggle improved the consistency of the pulp.

In the end, he slid a piece of bamboo sheet inside the milky white pulp. He then put the pulp-coated bamboo sheet onto a wall. Satisfied, Cai Lun sang melodiously, as his thoughts about his invention were turning into dreams of winning a famous award from the Han emperor. He glanced at his sundial and murmured excitedly, "It is time now, I think the drying process has come to an end,". All of a sudden, a mysterious incident shocked him into disbelief.

The wall melted into a pool of gray slop, resulting from his lack of attention. Fortunately, the bamboo sheet and the paper both survived as they have a higher melting temperature. The paper miraculously only absorbed a bit of slop, making it more resilient and absorbent. Therefore, he named his paper “Xuan paper”, commemorating all his endeavors and accidents. While he was swimming inside of the slop he exclaimed, “Yes! This invention is amazing! The people in the future can thank me for this invention forever! I am really gifted and talented! Good job!”

Human Touch

Singapore International Hong Kong, Liaw, Katherine – 11

“Why am I so un...lucky?” Xiaoci thought, suppressing the gruelling pain and cough.

“Am I going to be alone forever? I’ve lost my parents, the badminton tournament and all my hope...” Xiaoci murmured despondently, touching her sprained ankle and coughing badly.

“Excuse me! Look out!” The paramedics were race car drivers, speeding their gurneys down corridors crammed with shivering patients. Loud wheezing reverberated throughout ghost-white wards. Tension filled the air with the deadly 2030 virus outbreak – a grim tableau for the city.

“Hi, Xiaoci, how are you feeling today?” Dr. Zhiyi, the senior doctor of Hua Tuo Hospital, entered the “Xi Wang” ward and smiled at Xiaoci. “It’s tough dealing with both an illness and a sprain. Don’t worry, Chinese acupuncture and herbal remedies have over 2200 years of history. You’ll be up and running in no time. Here, drink this herbal tea,” Dr. Zhiyi grinned as he conducted a palpation.

“Your hands are always so warm, even when it’s freezing,” Xiaoci exclaimed curiously as she sipped her medicine. “Hmm, this tea tastes sweeter.”

“Yes, I modified the prescription. It’s good for combating the virus and restoring equilibrium in your body. Now it’s time for acupuncture for your sprained ankle.”

“Oh...” Xiaoci stammered, a tremor of fear rippling down her spine. “Will it sting?”

“My needling techniques are much finer than a bee, I promise,” Dr. Zhiyi soothed her, chuckling.

When Dr. Zhiyi wheeled Xiaoci to the acupuncture room, she gasped, awestruck. The room was like a small museum, with hundreds of cabinet drawers, glass cases and jars containing a plethora of preserved plants.

Poke!

Each needle’s insertion simply felt like a dancing feather.

Xiaoci let out a sigh of relief.

“This is to strengthen your immune system, reduce inflammation, and promote the body’s natural healing process. The needles revive the meridians and readjust the flowing of qi to balance the body’s yin and yang,” Dr. Zhiyi explained.

“Thanks, Dr. Zhiyi. This is for you!” Xiaoci passed a red paper cutting of a girl riding a dragon. “I learned this from my primary 5 art teacher last year. His ancestor is Cai Lun, inventor of paper cutting from the Han Dynasty.”

A lopsided grin played on Dr. Zhiyi’s lips, his slightly-cool hand patting Xiaoci’s. Her heart filled with warmth.

Before charging back to the battlefield, Dr. Zhiyi basked in the sun outside in the hospital garden to briefly recharge and clear his mind.

Over the next month, the harsh virus outbreak left all medical staff exhausted. Dr. Zhiyi worked day and night to ease the burden of the overworked staff, caring for the wave of patients overwhelming the hospital.

Boom!

To make matters worse, a violent storm erupted, causing blackouts and blocking out the sun. Hua Tuo Hospital was a sandcastle in a tsunami.

Exhausted, Dr. Zhiyi trudged through the gloomy corridors to visit Xiaoci.

“H—how are you f—feeling today?” Dr. Zhiyi’s voice was low and soft, as he performed a palpation on Xiaoci, his touch freezing cold.

“Better. Dr. Zhiyi, why are your hands so cold? You look tired and your face is as white as your coat today,” Xiaoci’s eyes widened into pools of worry. “You have to be strong; your patients need you!” Fear vigorously churned in her stomach. Hot tears spilled out like a broken dam and cascaded down her chin.

“Don’t w—worry. Just a sh—short operation and I’ll be fine,” Dr. Zhiyi whispered weakly, half—opened eyelids drooping with lethargy. He waved at Xiaoci in slow—motion before leaving. Xiaoci exploded into sobs.

“Dr. Zhiyi...Dr. Zhiyi...are you ok?” Concerned voices echoed along the gloomy corridor from worried patients.

The wind outside howled like a wolf calling to its pack. Rain pounded down. Worry thundered in Xiaoci’s heart.

“What if we passed the virus to Dr. Zhiyi?” This terrible thought rang continuously through Xiaoci’s mind like a broken record. She made paper cuttings of the Chinese character “fu” (meaning luck) and prayed for Dr. Zhiyi.

Finally, Xiaoci could bear it no longer. She had to see if Dr. Zhiyi was okay. Using her crutches, she snuck into the surgery wing.

What she encountered next left her speechless. She squinted through the surgery room’s door gap and was greeted by the sight of Dr. Zhiyi’s body hooked up to thousands of colourful wires connected to a gargantuan electrical generator.

“What’s going on?” Light—headed, Xiaoci staggered backwards, grabbing onto her crutches for support. Confusion gripped her throat.

But with each electrical pulse, Dr. Zhiyi seemed to be getting better.

One.

Two.

Five minutes passed.

Dr. Zhiyi stood up.

Energized, he strode out, his eyes gleaming with vim and vigour.

“D—Dr. Zhiyi, how...?” Xiaoci tilted her head quizzically.

Just then, the sun finally showed its face. Dr. Zhiyi took Xiaoci to the garden to welcome the warm rays.

“Ahh...I love sunlight. Such energy and hope,” Dr. Zhiyi’s eyes sparkled.

“I thought we had infected you!” Xiaoci exclaimed, puzzled.

“No virus can attack me. I was just depleted of solar energy after working many long hours without sunlight, but now I am recharged!” Dr. Zhiyi burst with laughter. “Try pinching my face!”

“What? Really?” Xiaoci pulled on Dr. Zhiyi’s soft skin.

“No pain at all!” Dr. Zhiyi chortled. “You see, I am a prototype created by Scientist Xiaoping, who made my predecessor, Jia Jia, back in 2016. I was trained by my elder sister, the famous robotic doctor Xiaoyi and my brother, neurosurgery robot Remebot to spearhead the advancement of Chinese medicine as a kind and resilient doctor. I am proud to be the first of many such realistic humanoid robots to reshape the medical world!”

“Wow! You can be my immortal best friend forever!!” Xiaoci beamed.

“Of course!” Dr. Zhiyi replied enthusiastically.

Mega-watt smiles formed on their faces as they exchanged merry high-fives.

“So, how are you feeling today?” Dr Zhiyi patted Xiaoci’s shoulder.

“I feel um...lucky!” Xiaoci winked.

Bringing Paper to China

Singapore International Hong Kong, Lin, Yuxuan Jayden – 10

During AD 105, sixty-two year old Emperor Liu was taking what would become his most memorable stroll of his life. He was very humble and wise unlike his father, who was fatuous. His upcoming surprise during this stroll would leave him to excel amongst other emperors.

Despite being the highest-leveled person in China, he was eager to learn from anyone – even the fishermen. He was silently watching some fishermen fish with their soft and tender fishing nets, when what seemed to be a brilliant idea popped into his mind.

In the emperor's time, when anyone tended to write a passage, or when the emperor wanted to write to someone else, they all had to carve it on hard and uneven stones. This was very inconvenient for them, and many people sprained their wrists while writing. Seeing the fishing nets got the emperor thinking: if he used softer material like those fishing nets, would it be easier for him and the others to write? He was in high spirits as he went down to the fishermen in a rather pleasing manner and asked kindly for one of the fishing nets. That's when he remembered – fishing nets had large holes in between the carefully weaved lines, and wouldn't be ideal for writing on. He sulked all the way back to his palace, until his advisor Zhang Rui came along. The emperor described his journey and his high hopes for making a better material to write on, and the problems he had.

The emperor didn't understand when his advisor simply laughed.

Zhang Rui was a bright and intelligent advisor, and he told the emperor to get one of his servants to weave a transparent fishing net – this time, without the big gaps. The emperor immediately brightened up and thanked his advisor wholeheartedly. Once his new “fishing net” came out, he excitedly used a brush and wrote some words on it. Unfortunately, the result disappointed him. The words he wrote ripped right through the “fishing net” – the texture was clearly too soft.

The emperor thought about using harder materials underneath the “fishing net”, and the first thing that came to his mind was stones. But he realized that stones were not in good shape, and it would take years before the stone was carved to a proper shape. Then he suddenly thought of tree barks – hard, but softer than stones and easier to carve.

Now that Emperor Liu had tougher materials, he was much more confident of his success in accomplishing this task. With renewed confidence, he tried to write on it with his brush again. It worked better, but the “fishing net” was still too soft and the brush tore a bit –better than last time– through it.

Two attempts, two failures. The emperor was about to give up when he rubbed his tired feet against a rug, which gave him another idea, another chance to succeed. Rugs are made of tougher materials than fishing nets, which would make it harder for the brush to tear through. Once again, he got his servant to make a transparent material similar to a rug's, and yelled his high hopes to the heavens for accomplishment. After the rug-like material came out, he mixed it with the “fishing net” as sweat dripped down his neck. It was a nerve-racking moment when the emperor used his brush for the final time to write on the combination of a “fishing net”, a rug-like material, and a part of a tree bark. He raised his brush high in the air, and began writing furiously on the materials. It worked! Emperor Liu grinned from ear to ear as he hugged his new invention. As the material had a similar texture to the papyrus (made out of the *Cyperus papyrus* plant), it got its name – paper.

Through Emperor Liu's hard work, he had finally invented a masterpiece: paper. Instead of keeping the secret of paper to himself thus only enabling him to use it, he was very generous and immediately shared his first piece of paper to civilians. They were all very proud of their creative and caring emperor, and they all fought each other to use this sensational creation first. Later in a short interview with some civilians, the emperor's advisors told him that

the civilians acknowledged the usefulness of his paper, and some even said that this creation was even more tremendous than any that they could dream up of.

A journalist in Emperor Liu's days, called Li Mingcheng, decided that this was a one-of-a-kind invention, and was guaranteed to gain fame with the people in the future. To make sure that people in the future would not miss out anything on the story of this creation, Li decided to write an epic volume called "The Invention of paper with Emperor Liu". In this story, there was great detail on the emperor's inspiration, perseverance, as well as his willingness to share his invention of the paper with civilians. And, just to make his point, Li wrote this story on the very paper that the emperor created with his own two hands.

Thanks to the emperor's determination to invent paper, Li Mingcheng's desire to write a story based on paper, and Zhang Rui's clever decisions, paper has been very useful nowadays and has evolved very much from the very first piece of paper. Whenever you use paper now, be sure to thank the one and only Emperor Liu.

Stories of the Silk Lady Retold

Singapore International Hong Kong, Liu, Siyao Emma – 11

In a rural village, a little girl peeks out from amongst the thicket of mulberry trees and spots an old woman weaving silk. She curiously approaches the old woman's loom. "Need help, Silk Lady?"

The old woman pokes her head up. "A Qiao! Well, thank you for the offer. It's about time you learnt about silk making." She hobbles over to her bucket, pockets bulging with plucked mulberry leaves. "There's *plenty* to learn."

"Silkworm larvae eat only these leaves" she explained, as she evenly spread leaves amongst the silkworms which tore voraciously at the leaves.

"Where did you learn all this?" A Qiao asked, peeping over the Silk Lady's shoulder. A pause.

"Goodness knows how long," she answered simply, "The ladies in the Imperial Court taught me how to make silk when I was a child, and I've been doing that ever since". She seems at peace, reminiscing. "Here, help me with the cocoons".

"The Imperial Court?" A Qiao gasped, indrecolous. "You cultivated silkworms for the Emperor?"
"I was the Emperor's daughter."

The thick steam from the boiling water warped the air, as cocoons bobbed up and down in the water, as part of a steamy soup. The two ladle out the golden bright cocoons, still steaming, and start unraveling the silky bundles. The soaked cocoons unwinded into a single, fine thread, then carefully reeled and left to dry, before being strung onto the loom. The Silk Lady works the thread gently, but quickly, the individual fibers weaving into shape under her fingers.

"As his daughter, I lived there." She reached a hand into the basket of white, plump silkworms. "I hated it. The rules and traditions of the place." Her tone turned wry.

"The other princesses and I spent monotonous days trapped in the palace, life passing by barely. By Imperial customs I was expected to be pretty, prim and passive."

"Members of the Imperial Court fawned over silk as a status symbol. They made the process of silk making a tightly guarded state secret so that no one else could have it. That part of Imperial traditions I despised. But what made silk special for me," she continued, spooling the threads around her hand, "was the hard work and artistic skill needed to master it. The time spent perfecting my craft was my escape." She pushes on the pedals and the loom creaks in response.

"The moment I turned of age, the Emperor decreed to marry me off to the prince of Khotan." She paused. "That was when I realized I had to leave. I had no more freedom than before. So I escaped the palace, bringing with me my silkworms hidden in a bamboo cane, and a dream to live my own life." A flurry of wings rippled through the canopy overhead, as silkmths took flight from their branches, and for a fleeting moment, the sun glinting off their white bodies parted the dense leaves.

The years past softened the blow, but her blissful, euphoric smile faded, as reality crushed the Silk Lady, even now. "I couldn't stop moving from thereon, with the guards in active pursuit. So I went from village to village until I reached a village outside of the Emperor's authority."

She traced a finger around the creases in the fabric, outlining a path in her head. "I lost my status, my title; but I'd never felt so free. but still I continued to make silk." The Silk Lady stared at the length in her hands, and smiled with genuine contentment. "You'd be surprised how comforting it was to find myself in this village, in the art of silk, was."

“Why tell everyone the secret to making silk?” A Qiao asked.

“Why did I teach them the process of crafting silk? This impoverished village, out of all chose to let me stay. This was an active act of gratitude on my part. It was all I had to offer in return to these kind people. I taught them the skill of making silk.”

A Qiao opened her mouth, but no words came to her. Her unanswered question hung in the air. Are you done? Are you fulfilled? Are you satisfied with your work? Silence penetrated the fortress of mulberry trees, as the Silk Lady ran her hand across the rough wood of her loom.

“I have done what I can, all I can,” she mulled. “I’ve taught everyone what I know about silk, I’ve passed down the craft.” The Silk Lady stared thoughtfully over the treetops, where steam from the vats of boiling cocoons formed a hazy cloud far out over the horizon, distorting the distant figures of merchants and traders, loaded with swaths of silk, traversing across the known world. “It seems that my craft has traveled further than me.”

She paused, soaking in the view of the setting sun, before turning to her young student. “And you, A Qiao. Silk, through you, will continue to touch so many generations more lives yet.”

The Creation of the Kite

Singapore International Hong Kong, Liu, Junya – 10

A few thousand years ago, in The Middle Kingdom, there was a brother and sister who loved each other dearly. Unfortunately when Ming became a loyal monk and was sent to a monastery sitting on top of a tall mountain, the two were separated, and did not contact each other for a long time. Meanwhile An, the older of the two, stayed in the village directly across from the mountain. An longed to cross the lake to meet her brother, but it was too wide and long. It made her miserable knowing that she would not meet her loving brother for a very long time.

One fine day, An was strolling in the busy streets of the town when an ear-splitting noise made everyone look up. A flock of kites swooped overhead, screeching as they made their way towards the green mountain on the other side of the lake. While others continued with their business, An stared thoughtfully as the birds disappeared in the fluffy clouds. A sudden idea had occurred to her, one that she had never considered before.

Racing back to her small cottage, An started throwing things aside as if looking for something under the piles of scrolls. Finally after rummaging for a few minutes, An stood up triumphantly with a few thin bamboo sticks and some blank paper clutched in her hands. She immediately took out some ink and a brush and began writing speedily on a blank piece of paper. A few quick strokes later, a brief drawing of a bird-like figure appeared on the paper. Reaching for the bamboo sticks she first used a sharp knife to cut off excessive strips of bamboo until it became incredibly thin. She placed the thin sticks of bamboo on a piece of paper roughly cut into the shape of a bird's wings. Once the sticks were stuck together in a structure to hold the paper up, she attached a string to the end of it. Finally she used some ink to write her name on the piece of paper to indicate that this creation was sent by her.

An held the creation in front of her. Grinning, she exclaimed, "Since this looks so much like the Kite bird, I'll call it a Kite!" Triumphantly, she rushed out of her house and found a fine, clear patch of grass to fly the Kite. An waited for a strong wind to blow before she hurled the bird-shaped object into the air. Slowly it started to float higher and higher as the fierce wind blew it towards the opposite mountain. "I do hope Ming sees it and reaches out to me!" An sighed hopefully in a hopeful tone as she watched the Kite make its way through the dense clouds, over the huge lake and towards the massive mountain.

Back in the monastery, Ming was busy helping with the cooking and as the paper object soared above his head in the blue sky. He did not notice it flying around, despite a few other monks murmuring and staring at the extraordinary object made of paper and bamboo swinging in the sky. Ming did not hear nor see it whooshing through the sky carried by the wind.

Days after days and An still had not received a reply from her younger brother. She glared at the paper Kite, "There must be a way to capture his attention from the air. But how?" An muttered under her breath.

The next few days flew by in a flurry of events, but An still hadn't found a way to improve the Kite. One day, An was strolling through in the markets, when she stumbled upon a stall selling golden bells of different styles and sizes. A small smile crept up on her face as she approached the grinning salesman. If Ming could not see the Kite, he could still hear it.

A rusty but loud bell held in her hands, An cheerfully returned home to where the creation lay on the table. She carefully attached the bell to the bamboo sticks before she returned to the same spot she had stood a few weeks ago. She repeated the process of flying the kite, with the newly added bell jingling powerfully.

As the Kite soared atop the monastery, it made a thundering ringing sound that made everyone's head lift up to see what was making the commotion. Ming squinted at the sudden noise and gasped as he noticed the name of his sister scribbled over the paper. He desperately tried to find a way to lower the kite.

Above in the skies, the dragon king who had been sleeping for centuries was jolted from his sleep by the blaring jangling of the kite's bell. Groaning, he lifted his groggy head, only to observe the desperate boy struggling to get hold of a weirdly shaped paper and bamboo sticks topped with a bell that made deafening sounds. On the other side of the deep lake, a determined girl was controlling the paper with a string, trying to make it obey her will.

The dragon immediately understood the situation. His glossy black eyes shone with tears. "I must reunite them!" he announced. In a flash, he realized that the large green lake was preventing the two from reaching each other. Feeling angry that the two siblings who loved and missed each other so much, couldn't meet just because of a lake, the dragon circled above the water. Stretching on his talons, the dragon king clapped his palms together, releasing a booming noise. Like magic the water in the lake started to dry right away. Land started to form where there was water before. Soon enough, there was a whole patch of clearing filled with beautiful grass.

The two siblings gaped at the abrupt change of the environment before sprinting to each other to reunite. The siblings suddenly felt a load of joy and happiness for they finally were together after many years.

The Hope of the Compass

Singapore International Hong Kong, Lu, Mingyi Sophia – 10

I vigorously scribbled on a piece of paper, gripping my pen tightly. The moon's bright glow shone through the window, triggering a flood of memories that came like a crashing wave from a decade ago. It was the night my parents had gone out to buy groceries, leaving me behind to stay at home waiting for them. Hours turned into an eternity, and I watched the moon slowly dip into the horizon and the sun rise again. My parents couldn't find their way back home and had no one there to guide them back. I snapped back to reality as a tear trickled down my cheek as I gazed at the moon. I was determined to change the world with my invention to help others to find their way back. For my parents and for the better.

The horrible pain of their absence remained within my heart, but I knew I had to focus on my invention and focus on what I could do about the upsetting situation. I was thinking, "Now, where would I even start? How would I even start?" I sat in my chair with a confused look. Not knowing what to do, I knocked my forehead with my fists desperately repeating to myself, "Think, think, think!" Looking up at the bagua hanging above my door, to attract wealth and ward off evil spirits, a thought came to my head, the four cardinal directions! I wrote down my plans, grappling with the shape of the invention. One step was accomplished, but I knew more challenges would come throughout this invention.

Thinking of the shape was an obstacle blocking my progress. I felt trapped, stuck, and unsure of what to do like a fly in a Venus fly trap. I sat in my chair with disbelief of accomplishing my difficult goal. I was bored and just lay down on my table, feeling like giving up. I was gazing at the full moon, when a spark of thought suddenly came to me like an electric bolt. I would design my invention in a circular form, just like the moon, a constant reminder of when my parents couldn't find their way back. It was perfect! I decided that it should be portable for convenience purposes so people could carry it around everywhere they go and to never be lost, to save other children from the agony of losing their parents. Exhausted from writing, I tiredly walked to bed, my mind numb with the thought of my parents gone. "How are they doing? Do they miss me? I miss them. I hope they know that." I thought, pondering about my parents, "This invention will solve everything I went through."

The following day, I pushed aside negative thoughts and pressed on with my invention. So far, I designed it in the shape of a circle, with the four directions upon it. Even though I felt close to achieving my goal, I also felt so distant from completing the invention. Since I needed some scientific information, I went over and stared at my notebook. It was all about some boring magnetic field of the Earth. My notes on the Earth's magnetic field seemed useless, frustrating me to the point of wanting to discard them. I angrily thought, "Great! How am I supposed to make my invention with these notes!" I frustratedly slumped in my chair. Minutes went by and my brain still couldn't find out a way on how to continue my invention. But then, a brilliant thought emerged. The magnetic properties of a metal needle help with being a guide. I felt prideful of myself with this diligent discovery. I spoke to myself in amazement, "This is it! I've finished my invention! Now I just need to test it."

I went outside just a couple of steps outside my house. I tried to find a way back using my invention. I followed it with great focus and eventually ended up back at home in a blitz. I thought, "Wow, this really does work! I cannot wait to show my invention to everyone!" I grinned with the thought of finally achieving my goal and felt proud and happy. Happy thoughts of rainbows and sunshine clouded in my head full of pride imagining what other people would think of my invention. I was surging with excitement.

The next day, I showed my invention to my neighbor and they were amazed. They also said, "This is the best invention I've ever seen!" They then spread the word to other people and publicised my invention for me. The group of people who got the word spreader soon surrounded me with many exciting comments saying, "How did you do it?" Or "Your invention is so cool!" I just told them my story calmly and they seemed very invested in it.

The following day, I was interviewed about my invention. Questions and comments were spoken, but one particularly stood out, "You must enjoy your success and fame!" This statement gave me a deep reflection and I thought, "Fame and success was never important for me, my invention was born out of love for my parents and a wish to make a difference. Their memory was my guiding light, and their love was all that mattered." But then, they asked about something that I have not thought about yet, "What is the name of your great invention?" I was silent for a few seconds, when I quickly spoke, "I'm going to call it the compass!"

In the end, the compass became a symbol of guidance, helping others while keeping my parents' memory alive. The wounds of loss remained, and they were painful and hard to accept. Honestly, I would never forget my parents, and through this invention, I felt a feeling of somewhat making them proud. But the most important thought through my invention was that I had learnt how to accept what has happened and how to transform tragedy into hope.

New Tales of Chinese Inventions

Singapore International Hong Kong, Lu, Yi Aspen – 10

Everybody knows about China and its mind-blowing inventions, but perhaps the most outstanding is undoubtedly the historical and cultural kite. This iconic symbol clearly represents China's everlasting and prosperous history, as it also provides joy to the younger generations who take great pride in flying them. The very start of the kite was rather unexpected; it comes from a humble farmer and his innocent son.

"Papa, I'm so bored!" Roughly 2000 years ago, in the lands of dark southern China, lies a humble village with its hard-working farmers.

"I'm terribly sorry, Yiyi, but we have our own problems." Father miserably said, remembering how their low-income family lost a vast amount of goods, wealth, and, most importantly, spirit.

It was a shivering night, with rain pouring down larger than marbles. Just then, a sudden jolt of lightning shot directly into the heart of the house, and it was eye-blinding indeed. The God of thunder and lightning, Zeus, was clearly grumpy. It struck the house like a sacred sword, slicing it into two lonesome pieces.

It was horrible.

Really horrible.

The crispy wind blew softly on his jet-black hair as he slowly opened his eyes. They really need to do something. But the caring father could not resist his son forlorn with nothing to play with and relented, tying an elongated string to an intricately carved bamboo hat.

When Yiyi flew it, it was surprisingly exciting and enduring as all the innovative kids carved different shapes in all kinds of orientations. The ancient kite danced elegantly in the light breeze. It really started to soar, like a majestic eagle roaming over the lush Savannas in North America. The nearly-harvested paddy greatly absorbed the cheerful atmosphere in the warm air. The surprised boy looked up with pure joy.

This phenomenal event soon spread from a tiny village to the handsome guards supervising the Great Wall, the monumental landmark of mainland China; it soon spread to all seven continents. Even the heavily dressed puffin children in the icy lands of Antarctica flew them, with the elegant emperor penguin and polar bears watching in pure amusement. In fact, King Henry VIII of England in 1001 was so impressed by this free-flying miracle that he flew one himself.

The kite was truly born.

In fact, it was a brand new start of life and culture.

Kites were not only used for playing purposes. This iconic figure symbolizes peace, playfulness, and a fresh new start. It is a sign representing ancient religions, and kites were also used for space exploration and communication purposes. The kite was actually the ultimate mastermind behind modern-day spy drones.

In the American war drone companies, a major problem is happening, stressing out countless amounts of workers and designers.

They were stressed.

They really were.

Jack, a quick-thinking and intelligent Drone designer, clearly noticed this radical design and applied it to the drone. "You see, this is the absolute miracle towards our seemingly impossible project. The kite is quick, stealthy, and vibrant in colors." He exclaimed in excitement. "let's do it!" The other members nodded in delight. The kite really inspired many designs and companies to work to their to their absolute zenith.

Not just only drone and aircraft companies rely on the multipurpose kite, but also space communication companies too. Five years from now, a long-distant relative of Yiyi works for NASA. Their task was to send the perfect object that clarified human existence and signifies peace and prosperity. There has been some debate on which object to send.

Some people say to send a dove, but aliens would have no idea what it is, and worse, doves are generally short-lived, with only an average of 7 years old. Traveling to a distant galaxy would take centuries, with the poor dove dying. This caused a significant breakdown, with crews needing help with what to do. Mingming, the distant relative of Yiyi, remembered how his family told those lovely tales about kites soaring in the air.

He thought.

He really did.

All of sudden, alarmingly bright, luminous light continuously shone in his head. “We could use the kite!” Mingming explained with pure excitement. “When clients fly it, they would be sure to know that we exist and are peaceful!” with that, the seemingly impossible task was accomplished.

No wonder the kite was one of the four impactful inventions, aiding companies with their designs and giving them new ideas. But of course, we should all thank Yiyi and his creative and caring father.

Unfortunately, nowadays, technology has completely taken over our absolute souls; as technology advances further, we will have nothing to stop it, so we only have one option – to embrace it. There isn’t much hope for returning to the comfortable old days, so we should treasure the time today. Sometimes, we fly high just like kites, but sometimes, we just legitimately float along, grounded by the society we belong to.

The kite is a teacher of many things!

The Problem with Books

Singapore International Hong Kong, Luo, Qicheng Harvey – 11

"Oh my god, it's such a drag!" I groaned as I banged my head on the table. It was the middle of Mr. Zhang's History class, and I was not having any fun at all. Laid there in front of me was my history textbook, terrible and fearsome.

"Wang, could you explain to me how the ancient people made paper?" My thoughts were cut off by Mr. Zhang's voice, gruff and demanding. He gestured to me to stand up.

"U—u—u—umm" I stammered, a bead of silver sweat trickling down my brow. Mr. Zhang's voice cut through me once more as he raised his eyebrows.

"Wang, the answers are in the textbook. Have you given it a read?" My partner gave the impression of sneezing, but I knew he was laughing—a harsh, ugly laugh. An intense wave of humiliation crashed over me as Mr. Zhang tapped my history textbook. "Books play a very important role in our life. If you don't read books, how could you learn?"

Half past eight that night, I knew I was supposed to read my books and finish up homework, but I was not in the mood to do so. How I dread books!! Whenever I start to read books, I feel my eyelids become heavy. How I wish I could live in a world where books didn't exist.....

I was woken up by the pleasant sounds of birds chirping. I rubbed my eyes and glanced around my room. To my astonishment, all the books in my room were gone. The walls of my bedroom were made of wood rather than concrete. Then, it struck me like lightning. My eyes gleamed like diamonds as I thought back to my prayer from the previous evening. Is it a sign that there is no more school, no more books?

"Wang, get ready for school!" Mom passed me a poorly knit bag while I received the bag with shaking hands. Being a resident of the past does not excuse you from attending school! As I received the bag, my hands quivered under its weight. Why was my new school bag so heavy? I opened my bag and saw a dusty roll of bamboo.

"Mom, what is this thing?" I furrowed my brow as I looked at mom.

Mom touched my forehead gingerly as she stared curiously at me, thinking that I was an alien that came from outer space. "These are the books that you use in school!" Fear resurfaced in my eyes as my mind screamed. Why were books in the past so heavy, why could I think that it would be better in the past?

My muscles struggled under the weight of my bag as I stepped out of my house. The "bamboo roll" was an ancient book that was very heavy. How can I go to school every day with this "beast"! I need to find a way to replace the "bamboo roll". Didn't Mr. Zhang talk about papermaking in class yesterday? I could see the triumphant brightness, and then darkness returned. Even after seeking help from all my brain cells, it turned out with no avail. Feeling that I had made a terrible mistake by not reading books, I hid my face in my hands and screamed.

"Oh my god! How I wish I had the recipe for papermaking!"

Suddenly, a 40-year-old uncle appeared next to me and smiled. "I may have the information you're looking for to solve your problem. Follow me." Giving the uncle a grateful expression, I followed him to an old cottage.

I was shocked to see thousands of things, including bamboo shoots, mulberry bark, rags, and berries, scattered throughout the house. "Greetings from my factory!" As he took me inside, the uncle said. "I apologize for the mess; I wasn't expecting guests."

"Oh my," I looked about the cottage, wide-eyed. "This place is incredible! However, how are we going to use these resources to manufacture paper?" The uncle held up some bamboo strands and a bit of mulberry bark, grinning once again.

"I have experimented with many materials that might be utilized to produce paper. The ideal combination would be mulberry bark and bamboo strands. It's time now for the last step. The mysterious uncle put the materials needed into a basin, using a hammer to crush them into pieces. After turning the materials into dust, the uncle put them onto a rag and left it to dry.

A few minutes later, the paper had formed. I held it up and shouted in disbelief.

"Wow! You're amazing! The bamboo roll would finally be repla—" Suddenly, a glow of light enveloped me. "Wha— a—t? What is happening to me?" I screamed as I struggled in the grasp of light.

"It appears that God was teaching you a lesson." the uncle said, breaking into another warm smile. "Oh, right. I hope you took the lesson to heart." With a wave, he turned to walk away.

"Uncle, hold on! Could you tell me your name?" I was gradually fading despite my valiant attempts to battle the light. The uncle's smile dimmed for once.

"Yes. My name is Cai Lun." He smiled one final time before turning back, and I vanished.

I opened my eyes, finding out that it was all a dream. Smiling, I noticed that it was the first time in my life that I was looking forward to school.

"Alright, Wang. Who made paper, please?" It was History class again and Mr. Zhang called me up to answer a question.

"Oh, is it Cai Lun?" I responded quickly.

"It appears that you have begun reading at last, keep up the good job!" Mr. Zhang signaled for me to take a seat while my classmates stared at me like I was a superstar. My journey back to the past in the dream has made me realize how hard life was without paper. The invention of paper has really changed our lives greatly.

The “Elixir of Life”

Singapore International Hong Kong, Man, Sam Hau – 11

It is the year 940, China. Southern Wu is at war with a neighbouring country.

At a nearby camp, General Zheng watches over the enemy city of Yuzhang at an observation post tensely. He is leading Southern Wu's army to siege the city. As Zheng squints and looks closer, the General notices the heavy defences at the city gates, the "Longsha Gates", as it's named. Even though the General was given enough soldiers to complete this daring task, he couldn't risk severe casualties and the possibility of defeat. But orders are orders. The General and his men would have to penetrate the defences and capture Yuzhang, no matter what and how.

The General was now ready to put the plan into action. He leaves the observation post, rounds up his men, and then sends them into their respective positions, ready for action.

General Zheng strolls around the camp, satisfied by how well his soldiers perform. He then walks by the camp kitchen. Upon arrival, he sees a group of soldiers on kitchen duty busy cooking for the army. But what catches his eye is how solid and fiery the fire coming from the stove is. He had never done anything like that before, so out of curiosity, he questioned the soldiers about the mysterious sight.

The soldiers can't help but smile a little.

"We were on our way here when a monk approached us. He offered us some supposedly "elixirs of life" for food for his temple. We decided to give him some of the army rations as we were curious. The "elixirs of life" were some kind of black powder; we then discovered its extremely flammable features—it can catch on fire in a split second as if it was by magic! It is great for cooking, even better than normal firewood. A wonderful solution to our fuel shortage."

General Zheng was amused at the story. The black powder: an elixir of life? He doesn't believe it. But words echo in his head:

“Extremely flammable...on fire in a split second...magic...”

A lightbulb immediately flashed over the General's head. He told the soldiers the "elixirs of life" would be needed urgently for the upcoming battle, took the remaining black powder, and gave it to the archers.

Zheng ordered the archers to coat the tip of their arrows with the mysterious powder and, when ready to release, to light it on fire. The archers were amazed at the General's cleverness and did what he said.

With the morning sun hanging high and bright over Yuzhang, the time to execute the invasion was now. General Zheng took a deep breath and finally announced the start of this fateful day.

"Fire your arrows!" He barked at the archers.

His archers fire the first batch of fire arrows. The arrows cast an angry arch of smoke into the pale blue sky.

Swoosh! The arrows cast an angry arch of smoke into the pale blue sky, then struck Longsha Gate. The enemy is completely caught off guard. Before they can react, another hail of fire rains upon the doomed city gates. The arrows surged perfectly in unison at lightning speed, the air around it whistling, and they reached their targets in seconds. Then, another batch of arrows was released. Then another.

The powder on the arrows did their job nicely. Flames instantly erupted from the structure, and Longsha Gate became a raging inferno. The fires from the city gates spread like an infestation with the help of heavy winds towards the

buildings inside the city, decimating the city from within. The black powder was more effective than traditional fire arrow fuels like twigs, fat and sulphur. The fire attack was a great success.

However, there was no time to sit and watch. Without a second thought, General Zheng orders with a wave of his sword, "Charge!" Thousands of men scramble out of the camp and towards the city gates. Not even thinking a second, the men broke down the gates quickly, barged into the city and let all hell loose.

The general and his army valiantly continued pushing inside the raging flames of the city gates and the chaotic city where the enemy wouldn't give up easily. He gives no regard to the ever-increasing heat and fire, continuing to slash and stab the swarms of enemies coming to him. He feels a scorching heat build-up, and then a painful sensation rips through his skin. He knows he's on fire, yet with unwavering determination, he ignores the dire condition of himself. He simply can't stop. There are enemies everywhere. With adrenaline rather than pain coursing through his body, he continues fighting to the bitter end.

The enemy general had no choice but to admit defeat: they had suffered too many casualties already. The enemies all hurriedly leave, abandoning the city.

The last sounds of clattering swords and battle cries fade over the tranquil evening. General Zheng's exhausted but thrilled men claim victory. General Zheng silently thanked the monk for giving him the "elixir of life", not knowing it was a deadly weapon which saved his army from thousands of casualties.

General Zheng would later be proudly promoted to Prime Minister Inspectorate of the Army for his bravery and resilience during the battle and the countless burn wounds he endured. But most importantly, he rose to fame for his infamous use of special fire arrows to burn a city and then capture it.

As for the black powder, the "elixir of life", it was later named "gunpowder" and is still used in modern weaponry until now. The siege of Yuzhang would forever be documented as the first recorded use of gunpowder weapons in battle.

The Invention of Paper

Singapore International Hong Kong, Poureshagh, Nasrin Grace Chenxi – 10

Jennie looked at the mound of paper that was taller and wider than the door to her room! She hadn't meant to waste so much paper. All she wanted was to make a giant, beautiful papier-mache dragon for her school's art competition. If she won, the prize money would make a huge difference to her poor family.

"Jennie? Jennie? Can I come in? I need to get your laundry!" her mother said, knocking on her door.

"No! I mean,... I can get it for you," Jennie replied. Her heart started beating faster than ever, there was also a cold shiver running down her spine, her whole body was so tense! She knew that if her mother found out, she would probably get grounded for a long time! Her family weren't very wealthy so every day they would try and save everything, like food, water, electricity and most of all paper. Her mother made money from collecting and recycling used cardboard and paper.

"Jennie, are you hiding something? You usually let me go into your room." Her mom was suspicious, her eyes started peering into the room. It was like she knew what had happened and Jennie had the urge to spill the beans! All that was going through her mind were the words "I wasted a lot of PAPER", "I wasted PAPER", but she knew she couldn't own up to the truth. All of a sudden, she felt her mother's eyes staring at her through the door, and not in a good way.

"Uhhhh, Nope! Everything is all normal," Jennie lied. But her mother didn't believe her! In a flash her mother forced open the door, and immediately her mouth dropped open as she gazed at the mound of paper.

"I'm sorry Mother, I was just trying to make money for the family by joining my school's art competition...the theme is "A National Treasure Representing Your Heritage", the top prize is \$5,000! I used paper, a Chinese invention by Ts'ai Lun, a court official of the Han Dynasty in 105 AD, and made it into papier-mache, also invented in China in around 200 AD, to make a dragon, one of the most famous symbols in China. I didn't mean to do anything bad!" Jennie said as tears formed in her eyes and began sliding down to her cheeks and jaw like a waterfall!

"Without telling me? And "if"? "If"? There cannot be an "if", you may have wasted all that paper just to lose. We taught you to treasure what you have and how lucky you are living under a roof safe from danger! Yet you have become like this! You are grounded!" her mother exclaimed.

"I'm sorry mother I really am..." Jennie apologised.

"Do you know when your father and I were young, paper was like money, everyone would pray for a day when—"

"Did you know paper money was also invented by the Chinese during the Song Dynasty?" Jennie interrupted.

"Don't interrupt me!" her mother said, raising her voice.

"Sorry,," Jennie said quietly.

Suddenly, her mother paused as an old memory came to her mind. "Ok. Now where was I?" She paused again and she suddenly remembered clearly.

"Ah yes, we would pray for a day where we could at least get one scrap of paper so we could sell it for money. At school I knew I was a little girl who was different – nobody wanted to be friends with a poor girl like me. One day, I was walking to the market and I saw several people sitting on cardboard boxes on the pavement trying to keep

warm. That's when I realised I should be grateful that I have clothes to keep me warm and a bed to sleep in and that I should never take what I have for granted," her mother explained.

"What you're trying to tell me is that I should be grateful for what I have?" Jennie interrupted again.

"No..., I mean yes..., but let me finish!"

"Then, a few weeks later, again on my way to the market, I noticed that the four or five people who were once sitting on the cardboard boxes on the pavement had now been reduced to one lonely old woman who was shivering and her teeth were chattering. I stared at her feeling so sorry for her. Then at that moment, I looked at the ground and saw a crumpled piece of paper. As I looked at it more carefully I realised it was money! My mouth dropped open and I felt happy yet so guilty because someone else who may have needed money more than me could have found it but I found it. Suddenly I got an idea: I looked at that woman and thought that she would definitely need it more than me. So, I walked over to her and gently tapped on her shoulder. Then, I passed the piece of paper to her and saw how happy and grateful she was. A smile immediately appeared on my face. However, at home my mother was not so happy with me. I was ignored by my family for a very long time after that...,".

"That's such a lovely story. Thank you for sharing it!" Jennie said thankful for the story. "Am I still grounded?"

Remembering her own story and what she did then, her mother replied " No, my dear, just don't waste so much paper again. Good luck!" her mother said walking out the door.

A week later, Jennie was at her school waiting for the results of the art competition.

"Welcome to our school's art competition! The results will soon be announced!" the host said. After announcing the runners up, everyone turned quiet as the host said, " The winner is..... Jennie Wong!

"I did it! I knew all my effort meant something!" Jennie said, running on stage to take the prize as her mother watched her proudly.

Ming Hui and the Compass

Singapore International Hong Kong, Reeve, Astral Lee – 10

The man sat regally on his saddle as the horse trotted along. He was returning from a tiring trip to Beijing and finally coming home. The man was Ming Hui, a noble follower to the Han dynasty.

Suddenly, the horse veered off the path. Ming Hui looked around for danger and realized he'd been steering awfully close to a snake's den. He turned back to calm the horse down but it was cantering too fast towards a sea of trees. Ming Hui fumbled to stop the horse but it was too late. He managed to grab his sack of food before the horse reared up and he was completely thrown off. Satisfied of its freedom, the horse slowly bucked down and ran off into the ebony of leaves and branches.

Poor Ming Hui! How unlucky his day had turned out to be. He solemnly stood up and walked back to the path. But after a while, he knew that the way home was truly lost. In despair, Ming Hui sat down on a rock to think.

Then, his leather boot suddenly scuffed over something. Ming Hui looked down and saw several small stones, each shaped like a finger. But even more mysterious was that they were all pointing in the same direction. Ming Hui then had a thought. *Lodestone?* There was only one way to find out.

After retrieving some string from his pocket, Ming Hui took one of the finger-shaped stones and tied it to the string. Still, the rock pointed in the same direction. Ming Hui suddenly remembered something, an old legend about an argument between the direction spirits, the story went something like this...

One day, the North, South, East, and West spirits were deciding among themselves where the top of the world was, and a thick piece of lodestone was placed in the middle, waiting to award the winner.

"East and West couldn't be suitable for us," South declared. "Their oceans are always moving, it would be impossible to give an exact point."

The East and West spirits were most annoyed. But despite their protests, eventually they had to give in and be ushered away by North.

"Well then, now I can build up my empire for being top of the world," South said as the tip of the lodestone wavered between her and North. "Of course you'd understand sooner or later, right North?"

North stared, "What? No, I am the one to be chosen!"

South frowned and a load of protests spilled out of her mouth with North doubling back in angry retorts. This fight went on for a long time whilst the stick of lodestone spun frantically on its axis, not knowing who to pick.

Eventually, the fight had to stop. Their argument had reached a climax and it was time to think straight. To add to that the lodestone looked as if it was exhausted from spinning around all night and day.

North explained that the Arctic Ice around his home was very strong and sturdy and would never ever melt, *ever*, whereas recently some icebergs had broken away, down in Antarctica. They could select a point without moving the location and always keep track of it. These were all good reasons and even West and East had teamed up beside him. Finally, South gave in to conclude North's victory.

Ming Hui snapped back to reality. He knew he lived in the northern part of China, Mongolia. So slowly but surely, with only a piece of string and his knowledge that the lodestone pointed north, Ming Hui made his way home.

When he got home, everyone was pleased to see him and told him they were worried about the additional days he was gone. Ming Hui shared his findings with them and everyone was very interested in his discovery. Ming Hui was also taken to the Gaozu Temple to see the emperor of the Han Dynasty, Gaozu and he was also very impressed by this information and sent some of his soldiers out to find more lodestone.

As with the others that Ming Hui had brought with him, he, Gaozu, and some of Gaozu's helpers worked to create a form of compass that was carved like a spoon and placed on a flat and smooth board. Once that design was perfected, they started making compasses for travelers all over China and even Western people came to know of this invention and shared it with their own nations, and soon new versions of the compass were developed. And that became the compass we know today.

The Discovery of Paper

Singapore International Hong Kong, Sun, Zhaobei – 11

Once upon a time, in a quiet village nestled amidst lush greenery, there lived a young and inquisitive boy named Ah Choi. Ah Choi had a deep love for books and spent most of his days exploring the written tales that filled the village library. However, the scarcity of parchment and the cost of materials limited the number of books available to him, leaving him hungry for more knowledge.

One day, whilst wandering along the meandering riverbank, Ah Choi noticed a lady indulged in an unusual activity. Her hands moved with precision, gently tapping a bundle of reeds against a flat stone. The rhythmic sound of their effort echoed through the air, intriguing him. Drawn towards the captivated scene, he approached her and inquired about her endeavor.

Ah Lun, an elderly lady whose eyes had a twinkle within them, explained to Ah Choi that due to the scarce amount of parchment, she was trying to create a new and innovative form of writing material. The villagers had long yearned for an alternative to parchment, which was both rare and expensive.

Enraptured by the concept, Ah Choi, imminently offered to help, to which the kindhearted lady agreed. Shining with excitement, he began to learn about the intricate process of transforming mulberry bark into this new form of writing material called “paper”.

Ah Choi marveled as Ah Lun demonstrated the technique. First, she mixed the bark with hemp and rags. The air was filled with the earthy scent of nature's bounty. In a basin of crystal-clear water from the river, they submerged the mixture, allowing them to soak and soften.

Ah Choi remarked, “It feels so smooth. I never realized they held such potential!”

“Indeed, young one,” Ah Lun responded, “Nature has provided us with much hidden treasures. Now, we shall beat it into a pulp. Here, take this mallet and follow my lead.”

Thud. Thud. Thud. The mallet repeatedly beat against the soaked mixture. Ah Choi felt exhausted. His forehead glistened with beads of perspiration, shimmering in the sunlight. His hair stuck to his scalp, damp and very moist, yet he persisted. Each beat felt like weaving dreams.

As the pulp formed, Ah Choi's excitement grew. He couldn't wait to see what would come next.

“Ah Lun, can we add something unique to the pulp? Perhaps flower petals or grass?”

Ah Lun's eyes sparkled with intrigue.

“A splendid idea. Let us collect flowers and weeds, and infuse our pulp with it.”

Ah Choi and Ah Lun ventured deeper into the forest, hand in hand, collecting delicate flower petals and vibrant grasses. Returning to their work area, they carefully incorporated these elements into the pulpy mixture, creating a tapestry of colors and textures.

With great care, Ah Lun pressed the blended pulp onto a smooth wooden plank. She skillfully spread it thin, ensuring an even distribution. Ah Choi watched in awe as the water residue slowly evaporated, leaving behind a delicate piece of paper. The sun's warm caress aided the drying process, infusing it with a gentle, sun-kissed glow.

As Ah Choi held the first sheet of homemade paper in his hands, a sense of accomplishment washed over him. He turned to Ah Lun, his eyes shining with gratitude.

“Ah Lun, thank you for including me in this incredible journey. I've learned so much, and this piece of paper is proof to our collective creativity.”

Ah Lun smiled, her voice filled with pride.

“Your help was a valuable treasure. I could not have completed this quest without you. Your curiosity and eagerness to learn has enriched our endeavor. Together, we have unlocked a new chapter in our village's history.”

With their hearts brimming with joy and a newfound appreciation for the power of collaboration, Ah Choi and Ah Lun shared their creation with the village.

One villager marveled, “Look at the vibrant colors, the delicate textures, and don't even get me started on the infinite possibilities that this homemade paper offers!”

The village chief replied, “This creation has taken our village one step further. I cannot thank Ah Choi and Ah Lun enough for their hard work and dedication. We will no longer need parchment to write on, and can use this cheap affordable method.”

Word quickly spread to neighboring villages about the remarkable invention. Visitors flocked to witness the ingenuity firsthand and to acquire this precious paper for themselves. Ah Choi and Ah Lun's creation became a symbol of innovation, resourcefulness, and the limitless potential that lay within their humble community.

Inspired by their success, Ah Choi and Ah Lun continued to experiment and refine their paper-making techniques. They explored incorporating various organic materials, from pressed flowers to strands of golden wheat, to create unique and exquisite designs. Each sheet of paper was a testament to the beauty and diversity of the natural world.

The village thrived as the demand for their handmade paper grew. Artists, writers, and scholars from far and wide sought out their creations, eager to use this extraordinary medium to express their thoughts and visions. Ah Choi and Ah Lun's village became a hub of creativity and knowledge, with workshops and studios sprouting up to support the thriving paper-making industry.

The once-quiet village transformed into a bustling center of artistic expression, attracting visitors from near and far. Ah Choi's dream of expanding the village library became a reality, as they now had an abundance of paper to record and share stories.

The art of paper-making became a symbol of resilience, adaptability, and the profound impact that a single idea could have on an entire community. As time passed, the story of Ah Choi and Ah Lun became woven into the fabric of their village's history, passed down from generation to generation. Their names were etched in the annals of innovation, forever remembered as the pioneers who turned reeds and flowers into a medium that ignited imagination and preserved knowledge.

Greatest Defeat Inspires Greater Success

Singapore International Hong Kong, Tan, Yan Xi Edlyn – 10

So this was what they called war. The molding gray tiles and the crumbling statues scattered across the ground seemed to be soaked in a layer of tense depression. Every footstep seemed to trigger a small cloud of dust, as if this seemingly sacred ground had never been touched by a living being for decades, possibly centuries. General Zhang's face remained grim, as he watched this scenario unfold from the sidelines. As the two sides marched closer and closer together, the deep navy blue from the opposing side and the bright cherry red of Zhang's soldiers contrasted brightly.

They raised their swords and with a sharp battle cry from both sides, started sprinting towards each other with no sign of fear. Almost immediately, the clanging of swords and knives pierced the air. The cries of injured soldiers sprawled painfully on the ground, in the process of dying but undead. This torturous battle seemed to last forever, but the size of Zhang's army just continued to decrease. He heaved a sigh, and groaned inwardly. He wasn't used to the feeling of despair, the sensation of failing. With his last shred of hope, he watched for a few more agonizing moments. It was now fully clear his soldiers were no match for Commander Chen's army. He need not waste any more of his soldiers' lives. Reluctantly, he surrendered. The sight of his bloodied, lifeless soldiers with their ruby-embedded weapons castaway on the ground was too painful to gaze at any longer.

Zhang walked away defiantly, chin held high, while the remainder of his army trodden behind him like a herd of defeated, ashamed cattle, waiting to be sucked into the ground to escape this sense of being gossiped about and laughed at. The sound of silence cracked the fragile atmosphere, ringing in the grieving soldiers' ears. Although Zhang's face was grotesquely stoic, his heart had been set ablaze by this unfortunate twist of events. He was furious, his mind already whirring rapidly, desperately trying to revive his dwindling army. He sought to avenge his many fallen soldiers, and needed something to quench his thirst for revenge.

Something new.

Something powerful.

Something utterly unstoppable.

Zhang pondered on the creation of this weapon, the invention of this tool to ensure his future success. The previous battle was one of the worst Zhang has experienced, and most likely the first where he was publicly ashamed. The news of his huge defeat spread like wildfire: rapid, unexpected, and intensely exaggerated. To escape his pit of embarrassment, he must build a ladder to hoist himself up, up in a way that he is above all others. To him, this was the only way to regain his dignity, that was lost previously to Commander Chen.

Many months were spent dedicated to this new killer creation, many hours sat in the study writing and brainstorming and sketching and calculating. Over almost 7 months, Zhang was either in the study or in his luxurious bedroom. He was rarely seen outside, or doing leisurely activities.

He was determined.

Determined to succeed.

Determined to win.

The study of his spacious mansion was elegantly designed and beautifully painted, the colors of red and gold displaying the royalty and superiority that he had been basking in his entire life. The draping velvet curtains and soft golden carpet absorb sound, transforming the study into a tranquil cache. But Zhang ceased to notice these details, and continued to calculate. He had made some progress, and knew that he needed something quick, similar to how a bomb operates. A bomb dropped is a button pressed. The explosion would need to be reduced in size, and possibly wipe out an army, one by one.

He picked up a pencil, and tried sketching something out. After many failed attempts, he realised. Realised this one could work. Eyes closed, his brain started whirring. Making sure that this invention would make sense and operate smoothly. Even came up with a name for it.

Not long after, Zhang called for a “rematch” with Chen. Unexpectedly, he agreed immediately. Chen was taken aback by Zhang’s sudden outburst, since from his point of view, nothing has happened since their last battle 7 months ago. He was surprised that Zhang would want to battle him again, even though he failed so miserably last time. Chen had an air of superiority around him, which Zhang despised the most.

This time the battlefield was entirely different. It seemed... alive. Small patches of grass sprung up here and there, a miniature river to the left. Zhang watched nervously, hoping desperately that his invention wouldn’t fail him. The battle started momentarily. Suddenly, Chen realised Zhang’s army were not wielding any weapons. Similarly, his army stared at Zhang’s, bewildered. Chen glanced at Zhang, giggling. “The man called for a second battle, but sends his army weaponless and defenseless? Pathetic...” he muttered under his breath.

As the first trigger was released, the first bullet was sent hurtling, the first sharp blast rang in the soldiers ears, Zhang smirked. To him, every one of Chen’s boastful soldiers dead was one of his deceased soldiers' lives redeemed. Chen’s men dropped dead one by one. He looked out, enraged and confused, until he saw the small, black object in their hands. He realised a moment too late. Half his army was already lying on the ground, dead. He glared furiously at Zhang, and eyed him up and down. He marched away, shouting multiple times for the remainder of his army to follow.

Satisfied, he fingered the cold, smooth surface of the gun in his robe and could sense that this cunning invention would serve him well for many years to come.

The Wishing Compass

Singapore International Hong Kong, Tsai, Caylee – 11

LiQi and LiZhen had tragically lost their father at a young age. Raised alone by their mother, they worshipped her. They returned home one day for lunch to find their mother in a terrible way. They didn't know what death looked like, but their mother looked as if death were coming to snatch her.

In unison they dashed across town and alerted the local doctor to the terrifying situation. He looked over their Mother and solemnly declared, "I'm so sorry, I'm not sure if my skills are good enough to save your mother, she is in a very bad condition. She might only have a few days left. I wish I could cure her, but no medicine can help," the doctor said after checking their mum. He began to walk away with sloped shoulders.

"No!" LiQi cried, "That's impossible! Just yesterday she was fine! Please, you have to save her! We have no one else but her!"

"I'm sorry, but I'm afraid that not even the best doctor in the whole district can cure them."

Thinking deeply, he recalled there was a possibility of someone who could save her. Gingerly, he pulled four magnetic rocks and a metal needle from his suit pocket. It was time for him to share with the twins something only he knew of.

"This can lead you to your heart's desires, which may be the most talented doctor and special medical equipment. You will have to piece it together and then face obstacles or challenges and you will have to travel a long way to find this doctor and equipment. You must remember this and this alone, follow the direction the compass needle is pointing to, and you will find him. I wish you the best of luck on your journey!" the Doctor announced before leaving the house.

The twins looked down at the rocks in their hands, staring at it from all directions, trying to figure out how they could piece it together like the doctor had said. After many failed attempts they finally managed to tie it together with some string, hoping it would work. They realised it was pointing north. The twins were ready for whatever challenges awaited them – they would do anything to find a cure. They swung the door open with determination and started their journey.

It was a long trek. As they trudged through the biggest wheat field in their village, they saw farmers hard at work planting and harvesting. They saw men grinding wheat into oatmeal and grains into cereal. As they walked through a beautiful grassy meadow, the fresh smell of flowers flooded the air and the long, green grass brushed against their ankles. They saw beautiful little butterflies dancing through the sky, they saw endless patches of rare flowers, they saw tall mighty trees guarding the meadow, some had long wispy branches, others had tall and straight trunks. The twins were already very tired after walking all this time, but they wouldn't allow themselves to stop as they had to find a cure before it was too late. They willed themselves to swim through oceans, walk through dirt valleys and climb up mountains. As they were hiking a dangerously steep and narrow passageway up the mountain, LiZhen suddenly lost his footing and tripped. Luckily, he regained his balance and shot straight back up. Just as he looked with relief at his sister, LiZhen slipped a second time and fell from the side of the mountain.

"Arrghhh!" his scream echoed through the air. LiZhen closed his eyes as the rough surface of the rocky mountain scratched against his back and hands. He frantically felt around for anything to grab onto when he felt a smooth vine.

"No!" exclaimed LiQi, who thought she had lost her best friend and twin brother, as she sank to the floor.

LiQi finally mustered the courage to look over the edge, expecting to see a bloody mess near the bottom of the mountain, but instead, found her brother clinging to a vine and staring at her from a few metres below the edge.

“Oh my god! You’re alive! I thought I’d lost you forever!” LiQi squealed.

LiZhen struggled up over the edge and brushed himself off.

“Whew! That was a close one! I thought I was going to die!” LiZhen exclaimed.

The two continued their hike up the mountain, careful not to venture near the edge again, until they finally reached the top. Instead of seeing a breathtaking view of their village from the sky, they saw an old man and immediately recognised him from the heroic folktales they had read.

“HuaTuo! Is this really happening? I can’t believe I’m talking to the most famous doctor in all history!” LiQi exclaimed.

“Can you help cure our mum please? I’ve heard that you have very special needles that can cure all kinds of sicknesses!” LiZhen asked.

“Yes, I have the needles to save your mother—” and he passed a small leather pouch to LiQi.

“We must head back immediately, before it is too late!” LiQi interrupted, dragging them both down the mountain.

They sped home to their mum’s bedside. HuaTuo examined their mother and slowly and gently inserted the needles from the pouch into her body. After a few painfully long minutes, full of praying and hoping, their mother’s pale and ghostly face slowly flushed with life and her eyes fluttered open.

“Where am I? Who is this?” their mother asked, eyes wide as she took in her surroundings.

“You’re awake! This is a miracle! This is HuaTuo and he saved you!” LiQi exclaimed, rushing over to her mother.

“Thank you so much sir,” their mother said, embracing the twins.

HuaTuo nodded respectfully and with a smile on his face, turned and walked out the door. The twins said silent thanks to the doctor for giving them the materials to create the compass, so that they could find HuaTuo and save their mum. The reunited family cried tears of joy and rejoiced.

How Porcelain Came to Be

Singapore International Hong Kong, Wang, Kelly – 11

Segregated from the hustle and bustle of the crowded cities was a quaint little village, settled within the deep forests of ancient China. Now this all sounds typical, a boring story with the classic boring story of an “amazing” discovery etc... but no, this was a truly magical village, and yes, I mean truly magical. This village was renowned for its extraordinary innovations. While neighboring villages focused on traditional farming and animal husbandry, this village excelled in creating groundbreaking inventions that revolutionized their society. Their unique ability to enhance and refine existing resources set them apart. The villagers constantly generated brilliant ideas that benefited their community in unimaginable ways.

However, today's story does not revolve around an invention conceived by an ordinary villager. Instead, it begins with a remarkable young girl named Jasmine. Unlike most girls and women in the village, Jasmine possessed boundless energy and an insatiable curiosity. Her father was the village chief, and her only other family was an extremely annoying older sister who never seemed to be happy. Her closest companion was Sophia, whom she had met on the first day of school and they instantly formed an unbreakable bond. Sophia's parents, renowned inventors themselves, held pivotal roles as advisors to the village chief.

The two girls trudged through the massive forest surrounding the village, chatting and hoping to find something that would satisfy their interest.

“Oh! You should have seen the look on her face as she continued to complain!” laughed Jasmine, unable to control her laughter at the thought of her sister’s furious gaze the day before.

“I'm pretty sure it was hilarious,” replied Sophia, looking amused at her friend's slightly hysterical laughter. They continued to chat joyfully until they could hear the unmistakable rush of water which indicated that they had reached their destination. Sure enough, as they emerged from the dense undergrowth, they were greeted by a breathtaking sight. Before them flowed a river, its waters shimmering like liquid sapphires under the gentle rays of the sun.

The pair frequently strolled to the river, venturing deep into the forest where few people would disturb them. In that serene setting, they conversed and engaged in playful activities, often discovering remarkable treasures bestowed by nature. On this particular day, as they recounted a memorable incident at school, their path took them past a prominently polished stone. Jasmine, blessed with keen eyesight, quickly caught sight of the stone's allure, unknowingly setting the stage for a transformative voyage of exploration and ingenuity.

“That's a remarkably smooth stone,” commented Sophia, leaning a little to be able to look at the stone more clearly.

“Yeah, imagine if we were able to somehow create things out of it, that would be quite amazing, but then...how?” pondered Jasmine wonderingly.

“Perhaps we could try to...” Sophia muttered, eyes out of focus.

“OHHHH!” exclaimed Jasmine, “we could go to your house! Your parents could help us!”

“Absolutely not,” she replied, “they would kill me as soon as you left because I know that we're going to make a huge mess.”

“Fine, then... my house?” muttered Jasmine.

Twenty minutes later the two friends were discussing how they were going to create a new type of ceramic. They sat in a corner of Jasmine’s magnificent room discussing possible ideas to try out, while taking it in turns to inspect the smooth stone they had found.

“What if we were to grind...” murmured Sophia but soon trailed off.

“What?” asked Jasmine, looking momentarily excited.

“Nothing, it's not a good idea, and plus if we get it wrong it might not end up that good for us.”

“Oh, it's fine” exclaimed Jasmine, “ if anything gets too messy, I'll just get one of the maids to clean it.”

“Well, if you're sure,” sighed Sophia. “So I was thinking that we could grind up that stone, and add water or maybe something sticky like tree sap, to turn it into a type of clay. And I think that if we do it properly, we could reproduce something really smooth, similar to the stone that you found.”

“That's a brilliant idea,” replied Jasmine, her face glowing with excitement.

Jasmine and Sophia, eager to start exploring different methods of creating what they sought to invent, decided to grind the stone out in the garden. They had taken an old hammer from a toolshed and were planning to smash it by hand. As the stone crumbled into a fine powder, the girls became more and more excited. The once solid stone now yielded to their efforts, becoming a malleable substance ready for their artistic touch.

With great care, Jasmine added water and a small amount of sticky tree sap to the powdered stone, incorporating the elements into a cohesive mixture. They shared the task of kneading and molding the clay, feeling the texture between their fingers as it gradually took shape.

Under the shade of the cherry blossom trees, their hands moved gracefully, guided by their shared vision of creating something extraordinary. They meticulously shaped the clay, adding intricate details and refining its form. Time seemed to stand still as they poured their hearts into their creation. The sun shifted across the sky, casting a warm glow over the garden, while the scent of flowers intensified, enveloping them in a fragrant embrace.

As they finished sculpting the delicate figurine, they marveled at the transformation that had occurred. What was once a powdered stone had now become a solid, smooth ceramic piece of unique porcelain, radiating a sense of enchantment and elegance.

They carefully placed the figurine in a hidden corner of Jasmine's room, allowing it to dry and harden over the passing days. A few days later Sophia went over to Jasmine's house and as she rushed into her room she saw Jasmine's glowing face, beaming happily at her.

“We did it” she whispered happily, and the two girls embraced.

The Leaves of Magic

Singapore International Hong Kong, Xu, Carolyn Ruotian – 11

It was not the soft singing of the insects that kept Yuan awake. It was also not the distant rustling of trees that had just started growing nearby nor the sweet smell of nectar coming from the blooming flowers either. It just felt so different. He felt so far away from home and his family. He was used to falling asleep on the hard, wooden bed, to the sound of his mother washing clothes.

But he knew he had to do it. He still remembered the nights he spent flipping through the dusty yellow pages of the old books. He still remembered the days he spent trekking through the forest. He put in so much effort, trying his very best to accomplish this test in the capital city, a place so far away from the home he loved. His journey had just begun, yet he felt as if he had travelled so long already.

He closed his eyes, but they popped right open. The silence that had settled on the woods was like an eerie spell, and there was something peculiar about the midnight sky. Through the wind that had just started blowing again, and the rustling of the leaves nearby, he could barely make out the... howling? He frowned, listening again. What? The silver moonlight suddenly didn't reach the ground around him anymore. He looked up, and there was nothing around him. No trees, no stars, no moon, and no flowers and leaves. It was as if the midnight itself had just eaten everything around him. He had heard the tale about the Midnight Monster ambushing travellers going to the capital city for the test, but he had never believed a word of it. But now, it was right in front of him. The only light around him was the tiny stream of liquid moonlight flowing through a little hole in the pitch black carpet.

The terror-stricken Yuan jumped to his feet, facing his attacker. The monster spun around, its deadly nightshade-looking eyes facing Yuan. It snarled, letting out rancid monster breath and spitting out vicious green slime that Yuan suspected was poison.

The tale never said that the Midnight Monster was fast. So poor, petrified and panicked Yuan wasn't ready to feel the soft brush of thick, shaggy fur. The monster lowered its head, getting ready to feast on its prey, and Yuan dodged its fangs as a last attempt to survive. But he was a little too slow, and the edge of the monster's poisonous fangs sank into his leg, and Yuan screamed in pain. His leg was on fire and he felt dizzy and numb. This wasn't the normal type of pain. It was pure agony, and he thrashed, trying to clear his vision, but that just made it harder to breathe. Eventually, Yuan's eyes slowly became heavier. He blacked out.

“Young boy, I have heard your prayers, and I have taken care of the monster,” a voice said, crackling with age and wisdom, “I respect your bravery.”

“Oh, thank you!” Yuan heard himself say in his own voice, which made his skin crawl.

He saw his soul floating in the dawn light.

“Once you wake up, the first thing that enters your mouth will heal you,” the voice faded away.

Yuan opened his eyes, finding the sun slowly rising, the monster gone. He was a crumpled-up piece of paper lying on the cold, hard ground, shivering like the leaves in the wind. It felt like his body was being stuffed with ice cubes, except for his legs, burning painfully. His heart was beating like he had just run from his home to the capital city without stopping, and his eyelids were still heavy, like he hadn't slept for years. A drop of dew slithered from the leaf overhead into his open mouth, and he felt something inside of him click, and everything suddenly started working again.

“Remember, the first thing that enters your mouth will heal you,” the old voice repeated in his head.

His legs didn't feel limp anymore. The burning sensation dissolved into faint tickling. He no longer felt dizzy with exhaustion. This drop of dew had lit a tiny spark of energy and warmth inside of him, making him so tempted to have more of it. Water, leaves, warmth...

A bizarre idea struck him. Yuan gingerly picked the leaves with jagged sides and a rich, dark green colour like the one above him. He set the leaves aside carefully, trying to not break them. He poured some water into the makeshift stone pot and put it on top of a lit fire for it to boil. When the water started to boil, Yuan put the leaves into the pot, and watched as the delicate leaves bled a stunning sage green into the boiling water. He let the drink slowly cool in the spring breeze, and sipped the delicious, delectable drink that washed all the pain and cold away.

He dried the rest of the leaves under the scorching noon sun to preserve for the remaining days of his journey.

On the last day of his journey, when the chill of the soft spring breeze started to enter Yuan's bones again, all the pain from the wound came back, making him collapse on the ground. Yuan took out the pot,

and used the remaining few of his leaves. The warm drink soothed him. The pain from his wound faded into a dull ache as he finished the drink and he managed to walk again. With the newfound strength, he finally arrived at the capital city, just in time for the test.

Yuan's drink, which he later named Tea, became widely popular. People loved its bittersweet and natural flavour, and created many ways of brewing it. Scientists even researched the health benefits of tea. This magical drink of healing power was then brought to every corner of the world.

A Message From The Sky

Singapore International Hong Kong, Yu, Yat Hong David – 11

The golden sun shone brightly on the picturesque fields. Lu Ban, a short and skinny young boy, was taking a stroll with his father, Lu Feng, a burly royal guard from the palace who was off duty for the week. They ambled through the vibrant fields, exchanging warm greetings with the hardworking farmers. Suddenly, a gust of wind swept through the rice field, causing one farmer's hat to lift off his head. However, to their surprise, the hat was not blown away and simply hovered in mid-air.

The father and son stood amazed at the peculiar sight. The farmer laughed heartily, "Autumn is always so windy! I'm tired of my hats getting blown away so I decided to tie it to my head with a string!" Intrigued, Lu Feng commended the farmer's cleverness while Lu Ban's eyes sparkled with curiosity. "If the string was much longer, the hat could fly up into the clouds, just like a bird!" he blurted. "Father, let's try to make one ourselves!"

Back at home, they experimented making a "hat" with different materials, and finally came up with the perfect design: a piece of thick paper attached to a light wooden frame, crafted in the shape of a bird. Giggling excitedly, they ran outside to test it out. With a swift throw against the wind, their paper bird defied gravity and ascended high into the sky, fluttering majestically. Lu Ban could almost feel himself soaring through the sky, riding the winds like a bird.

Their blissful moment was interrupted when a messenger suddenly arrived, urgently summoning all off-duty soldiers to return to the palace. In the midst of chaos, Lu Ban followed his father to the palace as they did not have time to go home first. The moment they arrived they felt the tension in the air, the generals huddled together with grave expressions. News had arrived that after a year of peace, the barbarians were again charging from the north, threatening the empire, so it was crucial to move all troops to fend off the impending invasion. At the break of dawn, General Liu, the most fearsome warrior in the country with a long lush beard, led most of the soldiers up north. Meanwhile, Lu Feng and some remaining guards stayed behind to protect the Emperor at the palace.

A few hours had passed since the soldiers left, and urgent cries suddenly echoed from outside the palace walls. Startled, Lu Feng and the others rushed to investigate. A group of commoners, battered and out of breath, cried out, "We were travelling back from the West and on our way in we saw the barbarians! There were thousands of them, fully armed and charging towards the palace!" The guards were appalled, immediately realising that they were fooled by the diversion that the barbarians had created. "They must have stationed some of their army in the North to lure our soldiers away, but in fact their main battalion is attacking from the West!" Lu Feng gasped. "It would be too late to send a messenger out and summon the army to return, by the time he reaches General Liu it would already be night!"

Listening to the guards, Lu Ban sat quietly aside but his mind raced. Then, a spark of inspiration ignited within him. He recalled the powerful sight of their “hat” soaring high in the sky. Perhaps, he thought, the “hat” could serve a greater purpose. “Father! I have an idea!”

Lu Ban’s plan was to use their “hat” to signal the soldiers to return. “This may work as the soldiers may see it immediately and retreat!” his father exclaimed. The guards created a huge “hat” with a gigantic word “RETURN!” written on it, and tied it to a string that could extend up to a mile. With the assistance of the wind, they launched it into the air. As the “hat” soared high above the palace, its message was visible for all to see.

The “hat” flew for hours, but still General Liu and his men were nowhere in sight. The sun had set and the cloudy sky was now basalt–black and brooding. Suddenly, the barbarians appeared in front of the palace.

Trembling hands clasped their weapons as Lu Feng’s men gazed upon their foe. The cold wind whispered and drifted through both the battlefield and the souls of the men. “Our plan didn’t work!” Lu Feng gasped. “We can only fight with just the few men we have here in the palace!”

The vast number of barbarians swarmed and swayed like corn in a field, yet it seemed like there were more of them than a thousand bushels could hold. Lu Feng, standing amidst the remaining soldiers, held their proud pennant aloft in defiance. Suddenly, the leader of the barbarians cried out and they charged, their feet clapping off the ground like the rumbling of thunder.

In the moment of desperation, a familiar voice suddenly bellowed, “We got your message from the sky!” The clouds cleared as General Liu appeared, riding on his black stallion and holding his axe up high. All around him, his troops emerged, roaring and jumping head first into battle, immediately turning the tide of the battle in their favour. The air pulsed with electric energy as General Liu rode forward, his eyes molten red and slaughtering any barbarians that dared to cross his path.

The enemy fought valiantly but the sheer number of returning soldiers outnumbered them and soon, they had no choice but to surrender. The clashing of spears, clopping of hooves and battle cries had finally stopped.

The barbarians were defeated, and the empire was saved. Lu Ban and his father were hailed as heroes and awarded medals of honour by the Emperor. This invention of what subsequently became later known as the kite had not only saved the emperor but had also inspired many more inventions by Lu Ban, the legendary Chinese inventor, whose achievements are still celebrated to this present day.

The Quest To Cheat Death

Singapore International Hong Kong, Zhang, Han Ryan – 11

In another universe, far from Earth, there is a planet. Technologically advanced, with different rules of life, it was called Htrae. Htrae was inhabited by creatures with blue tentacles for legs and inquisitive minds, floating around in transparent membranes on their heads. In Htrae, no disease remained uncured, and there was no lingering sadness—it was a perfect paradise. Everything was curable; nothing was left to cause sadness in its inhabitants, except for one thing: death.

The inhabitants of Htrae are now in the year 9042. Scientists believe that death is important; otherwise, Htrae would become overcrowded and face challenges like many other planets. Yet, in every society, there are a few problems. The problem in Htrae was that death was relieving and calming for the Htraeians, but it was heartbreaking for the friends and family who had to attend the funeral and watch as a loved one was lowered into the ground, leaving their life. Though sadness was often found and tended to in Htrae, nothing could be perfect. Some sadness and heartbreak would be held in the victim's heart, slowly festering into resolve and determination. Htraeians were empathetic and emotional creatures; when experiencing grief or sadness, they would do anything in their power to ensure no one would ever experience it again. That is how they built their society; but sometimes, it could be a bad thing.

Namuh sat alone in his room, staring at the wall. His friend Tibahni had recently passed away; Namuh could still remember Tibahni's bright teal eyes, navy blue tentacles, and the smooth gelatin that held his brain. The same gelatin that burst and killed him when he tripped and fell on a rock. Namuh's gelatin core trembled, tears rising and spilling from his eyes.

“One day, no one will ever experience death again,” Namuh swore, unknowingly causing a disastrous chain of events.

Htraeians who experienced death would receive treatment to ensure no machine to cheat death was built. However, Namuh was smart; he knew that the Htraeian government would not allow him to create the machine to cheat death. So, he stealthily built the machine himself.

Namuh locked himself in his room to work on his machine. He had spent ten years storing up energy for this masterpiece, investing millions in installing solar panels and hydroelectric dams. The machine took advantage of how the inhabitants of Htrae could survive traveling past light speed. It was based on a treadmill, where a moving walkway harnessed the energy of the surrounding planets and ecosystem, allowing the user to time travel at the speed of light.

Namuh slowly slithered to his runway, his tentacles secreting slime, his brain quivering in excitement. Slowly, he raised a tentacle and pressed the button. Whirring and clanking machinery filled the room, and lights sputtered out, converting into energy for the machine. The room was almost pitch black, with only the whirring and the light of the magnificent yet simple machine. Outside, the news reporters and conspiracy theorists could only speculate on how a

renowned billionaire had disappeared from Htrae in no less than an hour. The room started to blur, the nearly pitch-black walls blended into a mixture of gray and black as Namuh closed his eyes and prepared to be teleported back in time.

“Don’t worry, Tibahni; your death will only feel like a few seconds,” Namuh thought. Just then, the blurring room disappeared and Namuh was hurled back in time—about ten years before, the time when Tibahni died.

It was a simple matter of positioning, Namuh would appear just in time to save Tibahni with an anti-gravity gun, start the machine, and return to the present—all before his past self noticed anything abnormal. Just then, the ground materialized under Namuh, and a ray gun popped into his hand. Namuh had practiced this scenario for so long that it became muscle memory. Before his mind could catch up, Namuh instinctively whirled around and swiftly pressed the trigger of the gun, saving Tibahni. Just in time, the machine started, and he was sent back to the present.

Back in the present, Namuh was swarmed by a mob of journalists as he arrived. It looked like one of the conspiracy theorists was playing with a drone, which caught Namuh going back in time. Namuh was carried all the way to the town park, where almost hundreds of microphones were directed at him. Then, Tibahni cleared a path by pushing his way through to Namuh, and he dragged Namuh out of the park and behind a tree to hide.

“Namuh? Namuh is that you? Wha—what happened, where am I?” Tibahni stammered. Namuh’s gelatinous body quivered, and as he held back tears, Namuh leaped onto Tibahni and hugged him fiercely.

“I missed you,” he sobbed, as Tibahni awkwardly patted his back. The pair of friends were finally reunited

The days after were a blur. The next day after waking up, Namuh found rabid customers outside his door begging to buy the machine. Within a month, Namuh and Tibahni had become multi-billionaires. Eventually, no one stayed dead. By the time it got serious, the Htraean government had to confiscate the machine, but it was too late; the damage had been done. The machine required too much energy to activate, and Htrae was using up too much of the galaxy’s power. The surrounding planets had been stolen and drained of their energy.

Namuh had suspected this long ago, even though he regretted it immensely. His tentacle found the self-destruct button for the machine and all around Htrae, stored energy was released simultaneously, restoring the planets around them and the once lush forests of Htrae. As the vibrant scenery slowly returned from the pale, withering plants and the dying ecosystems to the galaxy’s various planets, Namuh etched onto the cold metal of the machine with a needle. “The flower of life only blooms in death's cold embrace,” he reflected, hoping no one would abuse this machine ever again.

Millennial Travels of Silk

Singapore International Hong Kong, Zhu, Yutong Sophia – 11

Continuous sounds of clapping. White petals floating in the air, against the serene waters of Venice. Yet not the slightest hint of a smile could be seen on the bride's face, without a veil, she looked broken, shattered. Essentially, her wedding outfit was to be displayed at the national museum, it was absurd of one not to fret. The priceless silk meant to create the veil had mysteriously vanished on the way there, and she had planned for months to create the perfect design with the perfect material.

"It never arrived, Ethyne, not even after all these years," my mother ended the story every night with the same sentence, and I had always been bewildered by it, given that the Silk Road was known to be a safe passage for goods to be transported from China.

Upon hearing this, questions would float around in my head. Sometimes, I would ask about it.

"Where did the silk go?"

"There must have been a big amount, how was it so easy to lose it?"

"Had there been a natural disaster around then?"

When I was little, I would ask the same questions over and over, but the answer I received was always as good as nothing.

"I don't know, sweetie. No one knows what happened to those crates of silk, even now," my mother would patiently answer.....

The story was practically ringing in my ear as the tranquil moonlight shone over me.

I kept my eyes glued to the road before me, difficult to discern under the faint starlight, glimpsing at my compass ever so often. From the opening of my bag, a thin parchment printed with block letters peeked out. "Miss Ethyne, kindly send all these supplies to the underprivileged children of a remote village in Afghanistan. The United Nations" I repeated the sentence continuously, rolling my eyes until my head became dizzy. I had to transport bulky supplies to Afghanistan using an ancient trade route created for the trading of silk. However, this UN humanitarian aid mission turned out much harder than I thought.

A chilling wind blew past my face, snapping me out of my thoughts, and flinging my compass right out of the car. On instinct, my eyes scanned the surroundings and caught on the small metal equipment just as I hit the brakes. Stepping out, I trudged over and picked it up.

Just as I realized how thin the sand before me was, I went tumbling down a hole, screaming. I squeezed my eyes shut and braced myself for the striking pain about to climb up my back from hitting the ground. Yet I landed with just a faint thud, on a massive pile of sand. My vision faded into focus and I got up quickly, dusting sand off my pants.

Before I could light up a torch and explore the inner cave, another swift gust of wind blew from the opening above, rattling what sounded a lot like wood behind me. I turned, startled.

Shaking, I forced my torch to light, and I could see crates upon crates stacked up in a corner, obstructing the only visible exit. For a second, I felt a rush of alarm and frustration, and I stumbled back, landing in the mound of sand.

As my panic settled, I slowly approached the wooden crates, taking out one of my modern equipments I had, I quickly pried the top one open.

The wind sent a piece of dusty brown paper flitting past me, and I thrust myself forward, seizing it an inch from the ground. The smooth sheet was covered with a beautiful hand but the words were difficult to recognise.

“Urgent...silk...China...wedding...Venice” I mumbled as I attempted to make out the words which seemed to be in ancient Italian.

My eyelids felt droopy, which made me want to slap myself, I needed to leave this place first! I forced my eyes open and stared at the blocked exit. I knew I could simply move the crates and leave, but my curious eyes were stuck on the message, staring at one word again and again.

“Wedding...wedding...wedding” I just couldn’t seem to put my hand on it. I started a fire to warm myself up from loose pieces of wood and some gunpowder from my pocket. I paced around, thinking, thinking, a story floating into my mind.

Suddenly, everything clicked into place. Could it be though? Was that even possible?

The bride without a veil.

The message about silk.

The wedding in Venice.

Wedding.

Venice.

My ancestors and I have always been privileged, as far as I know, we were always able to afford exquisite goods from all over the world. It all fit so perfectly I couldn’t consider any other possibility.

Beaming, I ran my hand over the fine, diaphanous silk, and started to move the crates to another corner of the cave. They were heavy and hard to grasp, but I managed to move them over steadily, knowing how valuable they were.

Imperceptibly, a tiny light shone from behind the crates, urging me to let it reach its full glory. After about an hour of heavy lifting, I uncovered a hole just large enough to climb through. I immediately took out my phone, sending a message to my manager briefly stating my findings. I had no idea when she would receive it due to the lack of signal, but I also had no time left to waste on the mission.

Shielding my face from the crisp wind outside, I crawled through the hole, landing with a thud on the sand. Surprisingly, I could see my car in the near distance. Slightly more energized, I trekked up the path, knowing how much of a mess I would cause if the supplies did not arrive.

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A soft light shone on the delicate display, the intricate design of the wedding gown fit perfectly with the wispy silk veil in my hands. I could feel the pearls and lace and feathers of the dress glow as I lifted the veil, the fine gold edges tickling my skin as the thin silk was placed above the gown.

A burst of applause came from behind the ribbon barrier and I stepped back, gazing at the alluring display. The opalescent lace gloves, velvet heels, necklace of pearls, magnificent gown, and the divine silk veil fit so perfectly it was as if the last piece of the most detailed puzzle was finally placed in, the result beyond comprehension.

Looking at the pulchritudinous showpiece, the tip of my mouth lifted just slightly, and I smiled.