

The background of the entire page is a vertical rectangular image of a misty forest path. The path is illuminated by a warm, golden light, possibly from the sun low on the horizon, creating a hazy atmosphere. Tall, slender trees line the path, their branches and leaves partially visible. Several small, glowing yellow lights are scattered throughout the scene, some appearing to be floating or attached to the trees. Two white butterflies are also visible, one in the upper left and one in the lower right, adding a sense of movement and magic to the scene.

CHI CHARACTER GARDEN

# JOURNEY TO THE WEST

CHI™ Programs Workbook for Elementary and Middle School  
Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)  
Mindfulness-Based Strength Practice (MBSP)  
Applied Compassion Training (ACT)

Certified by  
MBSP @ VIA Institute on Character  
& The Center for Compassion and Altruism Research (CCARE)  
@ Stanford University School of Medicine

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Art Images Assisted by Artificial Intelligence  
Published by Conscious Holistic Institute (CHI Institute)

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## Meet with the Writers



Mr. Tianyi Xia, is currently an eighth-grade student at Eaglebrook, a prestigious boarding school in Massachusetts, USA. From a young age, he developed a strong passion for history, particularly for the classic Chinese novels *Journey to the West* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. After joining his American school, his interest expanded to include a deep love for learning world history and exploring the ancient philosophies of other cultures. The wisdom and virtues of the positive characters in historical stories resonate with him deeply, especially the idea of approaching life and relationships with mindfulness, which has strengthened his admiration for ancient global cultures.

After completing the CHI™ programs in the summer of 2024, Tianyi formed a strong connection to the principles of mindfulness, compassion, and character strengths. This experience helped him tap into his inner strength, boosting his confidence to overcome challenges. Now, he is integrating this knowledge into designing the CHI™ story-based workbook aimed at providing students an engaged and adventurous learning experience, while sharing the essence of Chinese culture and ancient global philosophies with students around the world.



Mr. Boran Qu, graduated from Rutgers Business School and earned a certificate in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Alongside his work as a music producer, he currently serves as an CHI™ Programs Instructor. Boran is deeply committed to helping young people achieve holistic growth in both academics and mental health through the Peer Mentorship & Coaching Program he leads. He believes that MBSP and ACT are not only the foundation of mental well-being but also a powerful tool for unlocking one's potential. In this book, Boran's role is to translate Dr. Niemiec's MBSP Workshop and CCARE's Compassion teachings into language that is accessible and practical for students to understand and apply in their daily lives. He also is the founder and CEO of an educational innovative organization PearZ focusing on educational gamification design [www.pearZLab.com](http://www.pearZLab.com).

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## Chapter 1 Mindfulness and Autopilot



### Meet Sun Chaosheng

Sun Chaosheng is a 12-year-old boy who lives with his mom. His dad passed away when he was little, so it's just the two of them.

Chaosheng loves to draw and always looks forward to his history class, where he learns cool stories from the past.

Chaosheng lives in Lianyungang ❤️, a well-known city in China. It's famous because it's the birthplace of Sun Wukong, the Monkey King from the ancient Chinese story *Journey to the West* 🔥. In this story, a monkey, a pig, a monk, and even a horse go on an exciting adventure with a monk named Tang Seng to the West to bring back sacred Buddhist scriptures for the Tang Dynasty!

❤️ for more information of Lianyungang, please see page 16  
🔥 for more information of *Journey to the West*, please see page 17





### Autopilot Mindset

Chaosheng heads out for school early in the morning, his backpack slung over his shoulder. As he walks, his feet keep moving, but his mind is somewhere else, thinking about different things. He doesn't look around or notice what's happening along the way. Suddenly, he's already at the school playground!

He stops and realizes he didn't remember any of his walk to school—not the trees he passed, the open shops, or even the beautiful morning sky. It's as if he was walking on “autopilot”—just like when a car drives by itself, he was moving without paying attention. **This is what happens when we're on autopilot: we miss out on all the interesting things around us because we're too busy thinking about other things.**

Autopilot can be helpful for doing simple, everyday things, like brushing our teeth or tying our shoes. But if we're on autopilot too much, we might miss out on enjoying the little things and noticing what's happening around us. Chaosheng realizes that being more focused can make each day feel special!

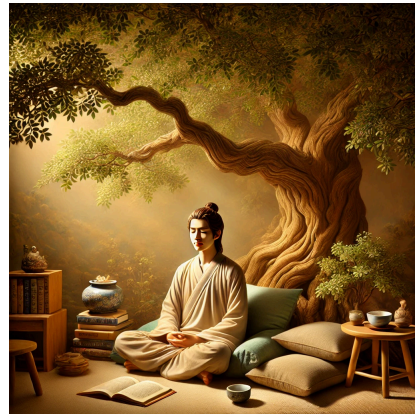
Suddenly, he remembers his homework from last night: Mindfulness means being aware of the present moment. He reaches into his pocket and touches a **copper coin**, a special keepsake from his father. Feeling the coin in his hand, he takes a deep breath and becomes more present, grounded in the here and now.

## Mindfulness Practice



1. We often go through life on autopilot, doing things like brushing our teeth, eating, or walking along familiar paths without thinking.

2. But what if we tried practicing mindfulness instead? Find a comfortable place to sit. You can look at or hold an object you've chosen just like Chaosheng's copper coin. Close your eyes if you feel like it, and take a few deep breaths.



3. Now, open your eyes and look at the object. Pretend you're seeing it for the first time, like

4. Zoom in on the object, seeing its details—light, shadows, colors, and textures.



you're from Mars! Look closely, without judging it.



5. Keep examining the object. Do you see anything you hadn't noticed before? Write down all the things you discover.

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6. When you're done, think about this: *Did you learn anything new about the object?*

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