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Opening Extract from...

Dear World, How Are You?

Written by Toby Little

Published by Michael Joseph

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TOBY LITTLE

Dear World,

how are you?

A young child's mission
to write to every country
in the world

Dear World, How Are You?

Toby Little

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For everybody who helped me with my project and for every child with a big dream.

Toby

Toby's Beginning

Dear World,
This book is about how I started my great adventure of writing to every single country in the world. My mum is going to tell you the story of how it all started.

It is not a proper story, because proper stories should have magical creatures and made-up things in them, and this story is all true. But I think it is also a little bit magical, because when things happen that you never imagined, then that is a little bit like magic, in a different way.

I don't want to spoil what is in the book by telling you lots about it, so read it if you want. I hope you all enjoy the book!

Bye,

Toby (age 7)

Sabine's Beginning

The whole thing started on the 16th of June, 2013. That day, Toby came home from school with a book called *A Letter to New Zealand*. School had given it to him to read with me at home. Toby was

five-and-a-half years old, and it was nearly the end of Reception, the first year at school in the UK. The book was a non-fiction book, and it explained how a letter travels – to the post box, in a van, to a sorting centre, on to a plane . . . all the way to a little boy in New Zealand. The book had a map in it, and Toby realized that New Zealand was a long way away. He had only just learned to write, and he asked me if he could write a letter to New Zealand. I didn't actually know anybody there, but I figured that I might be able to ask around and find somebody. Here is how our conversation went:

Toby: 'Mummy, can I write a letter to New Zealand?'
Me: 'Er . . . yes, I think so. I'll need to find somebody first, but I can ask. Would you like me to?'
Toby: 'Yes! Thank you, Mummy, thank you!'
Me: 'Okay, let's do that, then.'
[Pause]
Toby: 'Mummy?'
Me: 'Yes?'
Toby: 'Can I write a letter to every country in the world?'
Me: '. . .!!'

TELEPHONE
POST OFFICE
E R
Last Collection Time
Monday to Friday
6.00pm
Saturday
10.00am

China

Toby's first letter to China (which is included in the photo section) actually went to Hong Kong and his contact there, Ti Wei, wrote her response in both English and Mandarin. He became fascinated by the language and culture. In summer 2014 Sheffield had a Chinese summer school, where children could spend a week learning a bit of Mandarin, but also try dancing, food, watch films and make art. It was run by the Confucius Institute, who help people all over the world learn Chinese. Toby loved it, and asked to keep up with lessons. He has been learning Mandarin ever since, and is loving it. To make sure mainland China is also represented, we are also sharing some letters from the International School of Wuxi. China is one country Toby is definitely planning to visit when he is older.

Letter to the International School of Wuxi

Dear everybody,
How are you? What is your school like? Have you been to the Grand Buddha at Ling Shan? What do you do after school? What food do you eat?

Bye,
Toby

Response from Miss McKee and the kindergarten class

Dear Toby,
Thank you for letting us participate in this project!

We are the only kindergarten class in our school (small school). There are 15 kids in our class from 5 different countries – China, America, Japan, Korea & Hong Kong.

Our school is from 9:15 – 3:30 every day, and everyone eats the school's lunch.

We have classes for kids from 3 years old to 12th grade.

I have not been to the Grand Buddha at Ling Shan, but I think some of our high-school students

went there on a field trip a few years ago for one of their classes. We have many types of food served in our cafeteria from our 3 biggest represented countries – Korea, China & America. We eat lots of rice (every day), soup (every day) and other things like pizza, stir-fry, bulgogi (Korean dish of beef, onions, carrots and sauce), meats, breads and so much more.

I have included some pictures for you as well. The really big one is from November on International Day. We dress up in an outfit from our home country. The one with 4 ladies in dresses is also from International Day. Since America doesn't have a traditional outfit, we wore historical dresses. I'm on the left in a Colonial America dress, the next lady is wearing a Pilgrim's outfit, the next is a Pioneer outfit, and then another Pilgrim outfit.

Under that is 5 of our teachers at a place called Moon Hill in Yangshuo, China. VERY gorgeous place! The last page is from a cave we (the 5 teachers) visited. They have colorful lights shining on some of the rock formations. The one on the bottom is supposed to look like a peacock . . .

Once again, thank you for letting us participate

in your Writing to the World project!! You are a very ambitious young man!

Zài jiàn! (Goodbye!)

Nín de péng yǒu (your friends), Miss McKee's kindergarten class (Jaden, Viviana, Shekinah, Kensuke, Kai, Dana, Hiroshi, Ava, Ethan, Ji Won, Lucy, Scarlett, Amy, Sarah & Ilir)

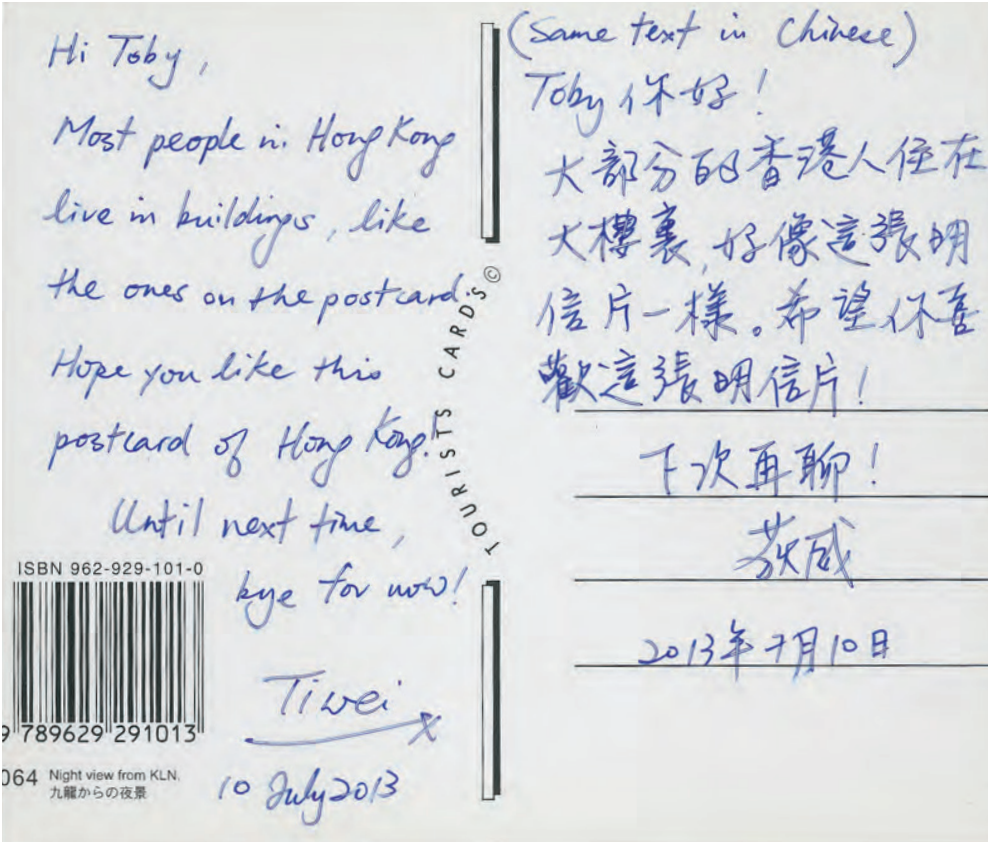
*

Dear Toby,

My name is Viviana. I am from Korea. My skol is called ISW. It is green and wit. After skol I have Korean Club. What is England lik? <3

Your friend,

Viviana



Hong Kong

Ti Wei's postcard sparked Toby's fascination with the Mandarin language and it continues to this day. He is desperate to visit China so that he can practice what he's learnt!

Iraq

We weren't sure where exactly to place this letter in the book, but it did go to Iraq, so that's where we are sharing it. Toby wrote to a Syrian boy, Dilan, living in a refugee camp in Iraq. ShelterBox, one of the charities Toby is supporting with his project, contacted us and told us that one of their volunteers would be able to take a letter to Dilan, and also bring the response back. It was an amazing opportunity, and we are very grateful to ShelterBox for helping us!

Letter to Dilan

Dear Dilan,
How are you? I am sorry you had to leave your home. Are you OK? Is it hard playing the tambur? What do you write your songs about? What do you want to be when you grow up? What food do you eat?

Bye,
Toby

Response from Dilan

Hi Toby,
Thank you very much. My warm greetings for you. I'm very happy to receive your letter, which supported me a lot. I hope that I'm going to be an international artist. I wish you a nice future and that we are going to be friends for you. Keep in touch.

Thanx

India

Toby has written quite a few letters to India – eventually he is hoping to cover all states and territories, like he did with the USA, Canada and Australia. It is very hard to choose a letter, so we are sharing the first. Ramesh and his daughter gave Toby a lovely introduction to such a diverse country, and Tanya sent us lots and lots more information – we don't think Toby will ever get bored with India!

Letter to Ramesh

Hi Ramesh,
How are you? Did you get coloured powder thrown at you at the Holi festival? Have you been inside the Charminar?

Bye,
Toby

Response from Ramesh

Hello Toby,
Wish you a very happy new year.

Thank you for writing to me.

India is a very big united country that is culturally divided into many regions. North India, North-east India, East India, South-west India, West India and Central India. Each of the above regions in India have their own language, food and weather.

Some festivals are celebrated across the entire country. And some festivals are celebrated only in a few parts of the country. The festival of colours (called Holi) is usually celebrated in the north and

west of India. The festival of lights (called Diwali) is celebrated in most parts of India, but not in some parts of south India. The festival of harvest is celebrated across all parts of India under different names.

Christmas is celebrated across all India. I hope you had a good Christmas. What did Santa Claus gift you?

I am sending you a book on India and I hope you will like it. I am also sending you a map of India where I have pointed out the city I live.

I had been inside Charminar a few years ago.

Ramesh

*

Letter to Tanya

Dear Tanya,
How are you? Have you been to the Lotus Temple? Do you wear a sari? Have you been to the Taj Mahal?

Bye,

Toby

Response from Tanya

Dear Toby,
Here are some facts not many people know about the Taj Mahal:

1. It took 21 years and over 22,000 people to make it!
2. The Taj Mahal appears to be a different colour at different times of the day!
3. It looks exactly the same from each of its 4 sides!

I really hope that you will visit India and see it yourself one day.

The Lotus Temple looks so pretty! I must say, inside, it is very very quiet. Unlike Delhi roads, which are very noisy! You can see cars, autorickshaws and even cows on the roads.

The Jantar Mantar is actually an observatory! It is one of 5 of its kind. The other 4 are at Jaipur, Ujjain, Varamasi and Mathusa. It was built in the 1720s by Maharaja (that means great king) Jai Singh II who loved mathematics, architecture and astronomy. Each of the buildings in the photo is actually a giant instrument (they didn't have tele-

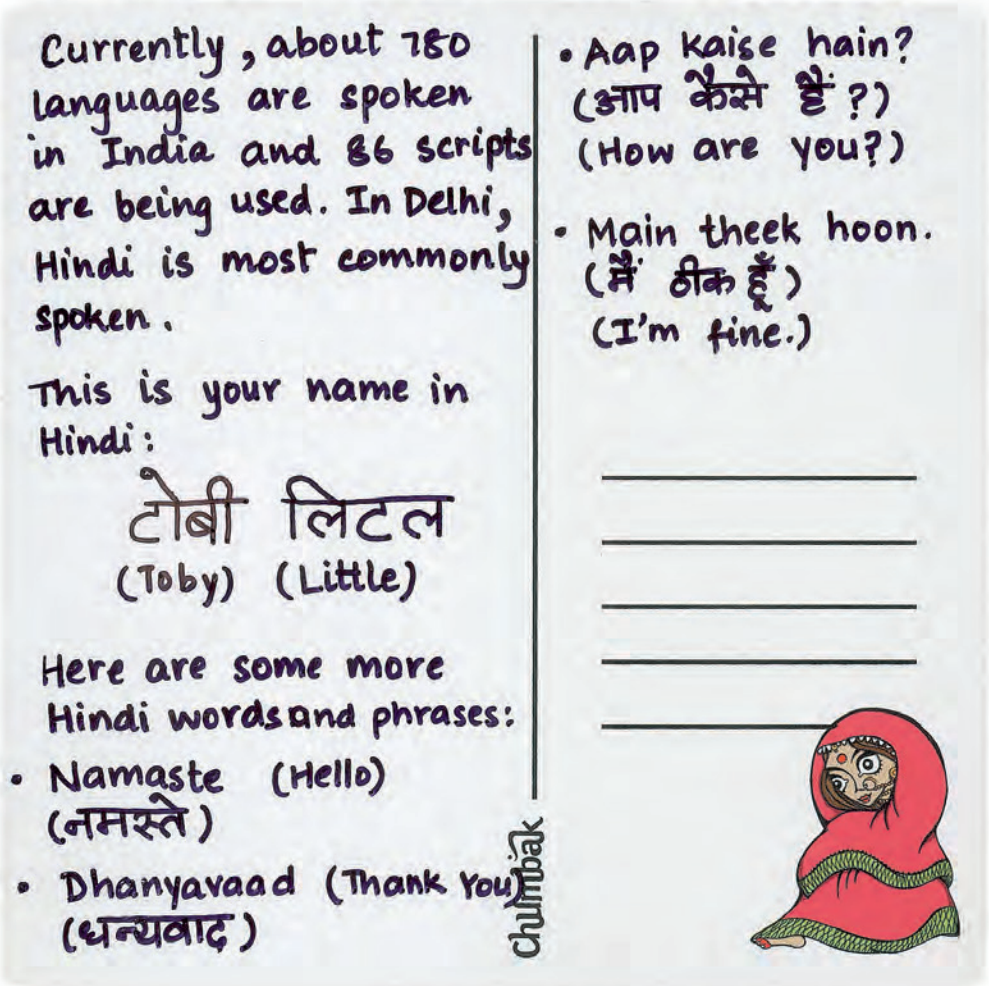
scopes that time, sadly). Jantar means instrument and mantar means formula.

Chaat is a (very yummy) type of snack food. This is my mum's recipe for 'Chana Chaat'.

1. To boiled chickpeas, add 1 chopped onion, 1 tomato and cilantro (coriander).
2. Add salt, red chilli powder and cumin powder as per taste.
3. Squeeze some lemon juice and you're done! In case you want to alter the taste, feel free.

I hope you like it!

Fruit chaat:
To chopped fruit (e.g. banana, apple, guavas, pears, orange, grapes etc), add chaat masala (easily available at a supermarket or asian grocery store). Add salt and sugar to taste.



India

One of Toby's letters went to Tanya in New Delhi. She sent us lots and lots of information, including a letter decorated with a traditional Indian block print (over the page).

Dear Toby,

I hope this letter finds you in good health. I really admire your project "Writing to the World". You have done an amazing job!

I live in New Delhi but sadly I have been to the Lotus Temple only once, and that too a long time ago! The Taj Mahal is in Agra which is 3 hours away from Delhi and I have visited it only once as well. It is very, very beautiful Maybe one day, you can visit India and see it yourself!

Since I am in college, I have to spend most of my day running; to classes or to catch a metro train ~~and~~ home. As a result, I mostly wear jeans or an Indian costume called a salwar kameez. But I wore a Sari for my cousin's wedding!

All the best for the rest of your project and take care!

Bye!-Tanya.